THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 19 November, 1937 Number 11

20 YEARS OF SOVIET POWER

Special Articles and Greetings

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A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 19 NOVEMBER, 1937 NUMBER 11

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The Labour Monthly

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Twenty Years After—Learning the Lesson—The Path to Socialism—New Enemy Technique—Communism's Ceaseless Self-Renewal—The World Struggle To-day—France—Britain and Fascism in Europe—Britain and the United States in the Far East—Bournemouth Labour Party Conference—No Facile Optimism—Vote on Unity—Rearmament Policy—National Government's Satisfaction—Imperialist Speeches—India—The Other Side of Bournemouth—Advance of New Forces—The New Labour Party Executive—Which Way?

WITH joy we greet this month, the twentieth anniversary of the first socialist revolution and the completion of twenty years of the first socialist republic in the world. When our journal first appeared in 1921, the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic, as it was then called, was only just emerging from the wars of intervention; our earliest issues were concerned with appeals for aid against the famine that over a considerable area had followed the ravages of the White armies. At that time all the enemies of socialism drew the moral that the socialist revolution could only bring in its train civil war, destruction, chaos and want. What a transformation is the picture to-day! To-day it is the capitalist world that reveals to all a spectacle of war blazing and extending in region after region of the globe, of destruction of the means of production through inability to organise them, of international economic chaos that can no longer be attributed to the sequel of the last war, and of economic crises on a scale exceeding natural devastations, leaving a trail of insecurity and want that turns the lives of millions into a nightmare. On the contrary, in the socialist world the complete realisation of the socialist organisation of production during the past decade has achieved an advance, year by year and month by month, that no enemy any longer dare deny and that for the first time reveals the limitless possibilities of collective society. For one hundred and eighty millions want and the fear of want, of unemployment and loss through sickness and misfortune, have been banished from their lives; the avenues of creative work have

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been opened. The one menace remaining for them is the menace of war from the raging barbarism of the outer capitalist world ; and against this the peoples of the Soviet Union are not only strong and prepared, but are leading the peoples of the world to fight this menace, whose defeat would open the way to the rapid advance to socialism in the remaining countries. In this way, through all the present struggles, twenty years after the first victory of the socialist revolution, we are able at once to greet the realisation of socialism where the working class has conquered, and to recognise the ripening of the conditions for the supreme struggle of capitalism and socialism and the advance to socialism in the rest of the world. *If we were confident in* 1917, *how much more we can be confident to-day !*

HAS the lesson of these twenty years been learned ? Are we ready for the new and even larger stage of struggle that is opening in inexorable sequel from 1917 ? That is the question that most vitally concerns us on this twentieth anniversary. If we are to answer this question carefully, we must state that the lesson has not yet been learned—*but it is being learned.* No one can have lived through these twenty years without sensing the deepening transformation in the whole outlook of the labour movement and of left opinion in relation to Marxism and the conditions of the struggle against capitalism. Under the blows of experience of the capitalist decline and reaction, and under the inspiring example of the victories of socialist construction, opinion, not merely of the few, but of the masses is changing. Twenty years ago, when Lenin spoke of the prospect of civil war in Western European countries, he could be held up for execration by a MacDonald before mass meetings of the labour movement as a monster ; and the Independent Labour Party, through the mouth of its General Secretary, could declare that it would rather go to hell with MacDonald than anywhere else with Lenin. To-day these old controversies are dead echoes of a vanished past. The capitalist crisis, fascism, Germany, Austria, Spain, China, the fall of German Social Democracy or of American prosperity, on the one side ; the parallel victories of the three Five-Year Plans, of Dnieprostroi and the conquest of the North Pole, or the new constitution of socialist democracy, on the other, have taught men a new language and new thoughts, extending to millions who were not yet awakened by the old controversies of political theory.

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THE old leaders and theorists in the labour movement who sought to fight bolshevism twenty years ago have passed to their account ; and history has written its comment over their strivings. Some, like MacDonald and Snowden, passed openly to the capitalist enemy. Others, who were ready to face facts sincerely, like the Webbs, to their honour have recognised that the victorious path to socialism has been shown in the Soviet Union ; and by this crowning recognition Fabianism, which originally set out to present its supposedly " practical " alternative to the " romantic theories " of Marxism, has ended by discovering on the basis of facts that the really *practical* path to socialism was the path of Marxism and the working class revolution. In the place of the handful of left-wing supporters in the other countries in the early years, mass communist parties have grown up of hundreds of thousands, as in France, Spain and China ; in the fascist countries the illegal parties lead the struggle ; working class unity is extending ; even in backward England the tide of working class unity is visibly pressing forward, despite the Bournemouth decisions, and its supporters now have their voice on the Labour Executive. The outlook of the main body of the former reformist labour movements is gradually changing.

IT is necessary to recognise in this connection that capitalism has also correspondingly changed its technique and methods to invade and disrupt the working-class movement ; and there is urgent need of sharper awakening to the character of these new methods if they are to be equally defeated. This is not only a question of the development in the practical struggle, as the old reformist blandishments weaken, to new whips of reaction and in the final resort fascism. It applies also to the ideological field. Against the background of capitalist decline and socialist victories it is obvious that the old reformist hopes and illusions can no longer have the same hold. No longer able to deny or ignore the victories of socialism, capitalism now exerts all its forces to organise destructive and undermining work in the field of socialist construction, and then on this basis, when the sword of proletarian justice strikes down the agents of the enemy, seeks to spread the poison of suspicion among the backward or vacillating elements of popular opinion in the capitalist countries against the new socialist order. To any one of political intelligence it is glaringly obvious that the same propaganda agencies which conducted the fight against Communism in the old forms (in this

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country, the *Daily Herald*, Independent Labour Party) are to-day specialising equally in the new forms. Equally transparent are the attempts to disrupt working class unity, or to prevent a common front of the working class and its allies against finance-capital. It is essential to be on guard against these new forms of penetration and propaganda. The healthy instinct of the working class movement will throw out this poison, will press forward in the fight for working class unity and the popular front, and will rejoice in the strength and vigilance of the working class dictatorship which knows how to deal with its enemies.

THE most important lesson that the Soviet Union has taught the world is that the working class can conquer, can hold and maintain its power, and can reorganise society along planned socialist lines which eliminate profits, exploitation, the anarchy of the market, poverty and unemployment, and for the first time make society a conscious advancing whole. Therewith the old debate of the possibility of socialism or of the path of realisation of socialism has received its final settlement in the court of experience. The task now becomes to organise the mass forces of the peoples, under the leadership of the working class, against the dying capitalist reaction, which now fights consciously as the representative of a declining order and fights with all the fury of a dying class. Here also the leadership of the first socialist republic is able to play a vanguard rôle. The lesson of the Soviet Union to the world was only begun by the October Revolution, and is constantly renewed and carried forward as the struggle unfolds. It was renewed with the advance to Brest-Litovsk and Genoa and the elaboration of the whole Soviet peace policy in the midst of the conflicts of the hostile imperialist camp. It was renewed with the transition to the New Economic Policy and the methods of manœuvre in the economic field in order to prepare the conditions for socialist advance. It was renewed once again with the advance to the frontal assault of the first Five-Year Plan and agricultural collectivisation. It is renewed to-day in the struggle against fascism, with the intensified arms preparations, vigilance against the internal enemy, and leadership of the world peace front. At each successive stage the new advance has been accompanied by the defeatism and defection of a faint-hearted minority. Every cry that is used to-day against the leadership of Stalin was previously used against the leadership of Lenin. Each successive advance has been proved by experience, and

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has become in turn taken for granted by the critics. Had these successive advances and adaptations of policy not been realised, the Soviet Union would have long ago been overwhelmed, and Communism would be only the sterile creed of a doctrinaire sect. On the contrary, the proof of the undying vitality of the Soviet Union and of Communism is precisely this power of constant self-renewal to meet changing conditions and to master them in order to carry forward the advance to the main strategic aims.

TO-DAY it is evident that, twenty years after 1917, we are entering into a far widened stage of the same basic struggle. We are moving into the conditions of the culminating struggle between the dying capitalist reaction and the forces of the working class and its allies on a world scale. Spain and China are foreposts of this battle. The struggle between fascism and democracy, between the present war drive and the popular peace front, are preliminary forms of the gathering of the forces for this issue of what shall be the future of the world ; and these preliminary forms are likely to have a decisive influence on the final issue. The fascist Powers, with the backing of the reactionary ruling circles in the other countries, are the leaders of the drive of world capitalist reaction to war and to world barbarism. The Soviet Union is the leader of the world peace front. How will this situation develop ? In the present position the balance of forces is such that the fascist aggression is still dangerously advancing and extending, but at the same time against an increasing resistance. The issue is still in the balance because the inner political situation in the leading non-fascist capitalist countries—Britain, France and the United States—is still in the balance. It is here that any consideration of the world situation on this twentieth anniversary brings us sharply back to our own problems in Britain.

THE advance of the People's Front in France is undoubtedly faced with a heavy offensive from the hostile financial forces of the country, backed by their allies abroad, especially in the City of London and the Foreign Office. Nevertheless, despite the threat to their economic gains, the retreat of Blum and the failures in foreign policy, the working masses in France are holding fast to the People's Front and even going forward, as the municipal elections in October have shown. At these municipal elections the combined vote of the People's Front, reaching four and a half millions against three millions for the reaction,

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showed an advance on the peak of the general election last year, from 57.5 per cent. of the total vote last year to 58.9 per cent. this year. The Communist vote increased from 13 per cent. to 14 per cent., and the number of seats from 25 to 107. There is thus no weakening in the internal forces. Where then is the weakening and the menace? The menace comes from the union of outside forces with the internal reaction, and above all from the powerful rôle of British policy, which assists the reactionary financial interests in France to sabotage the economic programme of the People's Front, and which paralyses any independent French foreign policy. The British Government, which fought the forty-hour week at Geneva (in Britain the recent enquiry of the Ministry of Labour has shown that average weekly hours have lengthened between 1924 and 1935, from 46 to 47.8), is determined to smash the forty-hour week in France; and the leaders of French trade unionism have recently had to complain that the failure of British Labour to follow up their advance is now endangering their gains.

BUT it is above all in the sphere of foreign policy that the British Government is shackling the policy of the French Government and of the French People's Front. The process that began with enforcing a reversal of the Blum Cabinet's decision to send arms to Spain and compelling Blum to appear as the sponsor of the British policy of non-intervention to which he was opposed, has been carried to even more extreme lengths in the present period with the Chautemps-Delbos Cabinet. It is true that at Nyon the British plan for utilising the piracy situation to slip through belligerent rights for Franco and legalise the piracy was defeated by the strong stand of the Soviet Union with French support, and in consequence the Nyon agreement became a first step towards a common stand of Britain, France and the Soviet Union against aggression. But the subsequent events at Geneva and after have once again brought out the British rôle and the retreat of France. The definite pledge given to Spain at Geneva that, in the event of Italy refusing the proposition of the Anglo-French note for the withdrawal of foreign combatants, the Pyrenees frontier would be opened within one week, was finally overruled and annulled, when the test came, under British pressure; the Italo-German demand of remission to the empty formalities of the Non-Intervention Committee was accepted; and on the Committee France was compelled to sponsor the British five-point plan which, in

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return for promises without even actual withdrawal, would have accorded belligerent rights to Franco. At the same time the overtures of Chamberlain to Italy have been openly pressed forward in the midst of this situation; the British Ambassador in Berlin has continued his close working with the Nazi authorities for Anglo-German co-operation, utilising the visit of the Duke of Windsor and exchanges of military visits ; and British pressure has been exercised on Czechoslovakia to enter into the German orbit. It is evident that Britain is determined to maintain the subserviency of the French Government, or, if the internal situation offers a possibility, to seek to replace it by a new combination which would abandon the Franco-Soviet Pact ; and that, whatever the particular incidental differences with Italy and with Germany which compel fluctuations in the day-to-day policy, the guiding aim remains the aim of the Four Power Western Pact, throwing over Central and Eastern Europe. The crux of the European situation is in Britain.

EVEN more serious is the British rôle in the Far Eastern situation, with special reference to the United States. In the United States a definite advance can be registered both in the internal situation and in foreign policy. The present stage is not such as to bring the conditions for a popular front yet in view. But signs of the gathering of conditions for such a development in the next stage can already be seen in the character of the present struggle over the New Deal, the Supreme Court and foreign policy ; the offensive of Wall Street against Roosevelt ; the polarising of the right Democrats towards the Republicans ; the political rôle of the Committee for Industrial Organisation ; and the combination of the left Democrats, farmer, labour and Communist forces against the offensive of Wall Street, the social reactionaries and the isolationists. Under the influence of this internal situation, as well as in relation to United States interests in the Far East, President Roosevelt made his significant call of October 5 for a " concerted effort " by " the peace-loving nations " and for the " quarantine " of the aggressor States. The opportunity of 1932 was repeated at a higher stage and in more definite shape. What was the response of the National Government ? Once again, up to the present, the history of 1932 has been repeated. The only response was the speech of Chamberlain at the Conservative Conference, which, under cover of a formal welcome, made no attempt to take up the proposition concretely, but on the contrary went out of his

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way to issue a warning against any "premature" attempts to specify "any particular course of action," and thereafter devoted its enthusiastic concern to hopes of an agreement with Fascist Italy. Once again the crux of the Far Eastern situation, as of the European situation, is in Britain, which hampers and obstructs the declared readiness of the United States to make some stand.

IT is against this background of the realities of the world situation and the present rôle of the British Government, no less than in relation to the internal issues, that the question of the relations of the National Government and the Labour Movement takes on such crucial significance. *It is against this background that we need to judge the outcome of the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference.* The Bournemouth Labour Party Conference had the responsibility to voice the fight of the working people of Britain against the National Government, to tear down the veil of supposed national unity around the policy of the National Government, to unify all the forces opposed to the National Government, and to concentrate the fight on the burning issues of present policy, both at home and abroad, in such a way as to prepare the conditions for the defeat of the National Government and the return of a parliamentary majority for an alternative policy and Government in the near future. Did the Bournemouth Conference fulfil this task? It is by this test that we must finally judge the Bournemouth Conference, and that history will judge it.

IF we endeavour to weigh the outcome of Bournemouth against this background of the real forces of the world situation, the rôle of the National Government, and the responsibility of the Labour Movement of this country, we shall not be in danger of falling into the trap of a too facile optimism because of the signs of advance that were undoubtedly registered in respect of the inner situation in the Labour Party. These signs of advance were of the greatest significance; and we shall come presently to that significance and the possibilities they hold out. There is not the slightest doubt that forces of change are coming to the front in the Labour Party, and already made themselves felt in a preliminary stage at Bournemouth; and that these forces of change can and should herald a new upward movement, as already indicated at North Islington, and, we may hope, at the municipal elections. Bournemouth was no longer Edinburgh; and we may legitimately hope that, just as Edinburgh

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marked the lowest point, so Bournemouth may come to be remembered as having revealed the first signs of a new stage. *But just as after Edinburgh it was necessary to utter a warning against moods of depression which failed to see the real forces advancing below the surface, so after Bournemouth it is necessary to utter an even sharper warning against moods of exaggerated optimism and satisfaction, as if the decisive turn had already been achieved and all could now go forward for the Labour Party in a glorious united advance.* On the contrary, no decisive turn has yet been achieved at Bournemouth. The Bournemouth decisions on policy were even more reactionary than those of Edinburgh ; and if the left concessions in respect of organisation should serve the purpose of harnessing a wider measure of support for what remains in fact a reactionary policy, the outlook would be menacing in the extreme.

IT is therefore essential at the outset to pay very careful attention to the reactionary and dangerous character of the Bournemouth decisions on the most important issues of policy. This does not only apply to the rejection of working class unity by a vote which, although not allowed to be taken directly on the issue of unity, in effect showed a majority, both of the trade unions and of the local labour party delegates, against the proposals for unity by affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party. The result was in itself a foregone conclusion, after the votes at previous trade union conferences ; and the lowering of the total for unity to 373,000 as against 592,000 at Edinburgh, can be in part explained by the turnover of the miners' vote of 400,000 owing to one section of the miners at the previous miners' conference voting against their mandates ; but for this, the total would have shown an increase, corresponding to the real advance in the movement. Nevertheless, the failure to realise a higher vote, also in the local labour parties, carries an important warning to the supporters of unity in respect of weaknesses in the unity campaign : the too abstract approach to unity, the difficulties through the disruptive rôle of the Independent Labour Party, the contradictions on rearmament and peace policy, and the last-minute boycott by prominent leaders with regard to the Labour recruitment campaign. We are confident that these difficulties will be overcome in the future ; the issue of unity is far too urgent to be turned aside. In the practical struggle, as already in the municipal elections, the objections that are still felt in many local labour quarters to stand in the way of

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co-operation will be found, and are being found, to be not so great as imagined ; the positive value of a combination of forces is being learned in local experience on an extending scale. But meanwhile the decision on unity is a heavy handicap to the advance that all feel should now be realised ; and it is urgently necessary that a fresh approach should be made as soon as possible to consider this whole question anew in the light of the situation after Bournemouth, not on the basis of the old debating points, but in relation to real facts and needs.

THE key to Bournemouth, however, was not the decision on unity, which was never directly discussed as a straight issue, but the decision on rearmament. It is evident from the overwhelming majority for the National Council of Labour memorandum that the real significance of the policy adopted, and where it leads, was not understood. In form, as at Edinburgh, the vote was a vote for a foreign policy of collective security and a recognition of the necessity of armed defence against fascism, while criticising the foreign policy of the National Government. In fact, as the supporting speeches made abundantly clear, it was a vote for support of the National Government in its re-armament programme, *irrespective of its foreign policy*. Where at Edinburgh there had been still an appearance of ambiguity, all ambiguity was now swept aside, not indeed in the memorandum, but in the supporting speeches. The thin wall of distinction between abstention and open support vanished. The right wing speeches on behalf of the Executive openly took the line, not merely of national defence, but of Empire defence. The opposing voices from the Executive which had been heard at Edinburgh, and which had carried the majority on the Parliamentary Labour Party Executive in July, were silent. Yet, while the ambiguity and half-hearted surrender of Edinburgh had met with an opposition of 657,000, the downright imperialist line of Bournemouth met with only a dwindled opposition of 228,000. It is thus necessary to recognise that there was here objectively a very serious move to the right, under the stress of the present war situation, a move to collaboration with the National Government, and to support of future imperialist war. This may not have been the intention of the majority of the delegates voting. But it is the practical effect of the resolution.

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FOR those who may query such an interpretation of the decision, it is only necessary to note two facts. The first is the unconcealed joy of the National Government and its press over the decision.

> As there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine good men who support the National Government and have no need of repentance, we very heartily welcome this belated conversion to the true faith. (Neville Chamberlain, speech to the Conservative Conference, October 8).

No less significant was the speech of the War Minister to the trade union representatives at the National Trade Union Club, when he called on them, as the logical sequel of the Norwich and Bournemouth decision, to become recruiting sergeants for the National Government.

> Will you who show such enthusiasm in bringing people into your own fold, help to do the same for the Army ?
>
> Will you, in order to fulfil the meaning of the resolutions passed at the Labour Party Conference and the Trades Union Congress, find the means of securing that every gun supplied to the Army and every man to serve is bringing nearer not war but peace. (War Minister Hore-Belisha at the National Trade Union Club, October 13).

The National Government hopefully looks to Bournemouth as the inclined plane to 1914.

THE second and even more important indication of the real direction of policy is the character of the principal speeches supporting the arms resolution on behalf of the Executive. In these the road travelled since Edinburgh was sharply shown. The right wing was far more open and confident than at any time since the war in its support of imperialism. If nothing else could have aroused a sense of warning, it should have been aroused by the notorious tirade of Mr. James Walker when he wound up for the Executive " in a powerful speech which almost took the breath of the Conference away : it was the first big Labour Conference speech for a generation that has struck the patriotic note " (*Manchester Guardian*, October 10). Conveniently forgetting the four hundred and thirty millions of subject peoples in the Empire, or six sevenths of its population, he held up the Empire as the home of democracy :

> All feel very much safer with an armed Britain—not because of the National Government, but because Britain, as the mother of democracies, has always stood for democratic liberty. (A delegate : " What of

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> India ? ") Shall we leave India for Japan, Germany and Italy to walk in ? . . . .
>
> Under the British flag there is more democracy than in any other country in the world. . . . What is the biggest thing they (the Fascists) can attack ? The British Empire. Where does more democracy exist than in Great Britain ? Does it exist in Russia ? (Loud cries of " Yes.") It does not (Cries of " Question.") (Mr. James Walker, *Manchester Guardian* report, October 10.)

This was not the irresponsible utterance of an individual delegate. It was the official reply to the entire armaments discussion on behalf of the Labour Party Executive by the chosen spokesman of the Executive. Not a single statement in it was repudiated by the Executive. We should be blind and frivolous fools if we do not take full warning from this where the still dominant right wing policy is going.

NO less revealing was the treatment of India. There was a resolution on India on the agenda. It was a resolution calling for democratic rights for India. It called for a Constituent Assembly, elected by the universal suffrage of the Indian people, in order that the Indian people should choose for themselves what kind of constitution they would wish to have. No democrat could oppose this resolution. Yet the agenda was so handled as to prevent this resolution being reached. It was put off day by day to the last. On Friday the Conference adjourned at mid-day without reaching this resolution, which was remitted to the new Executive. There was no excuse for this boycott of India. Nothing prevented it being taken on Friday afternoon, if there had been any serious concern with this question. The elementary democratic claim of three hundred and sixty millions of this Empire, whose supposed democracy Mr. James Walker was so excited to laud in empty words, was not considered worth five minutes of the Conference's time. The Conference was prevented from facing the challenge of democracy in India. Such a challenge would have been less pleasing to the imperialist masters than the docile support of rearmament. It was discreetly ruled out. Is it surprising that India's political leaders regard with cynical contempt the professions of the Labour Party to stand for democracy ? The challenge of democracy in India is the acid test for every British trade unionist and socialist who wishes seriously to stand for democracy.

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THIS was one side of the Bournemouth Conference—the dangerous side of the real official dominant policy which we must never for one moment lose from sight and which we have still to fight and overcome. There was another side. Already in analysing Edinburgh a year ago we noted that Edinburgh revealed a twofold process, not only the advance of reactionary policy, but also the growth and advance of new forces pressing towards a real revival of the working class movement. At Bournemouth this twofold process was carried very much further forward, *on both sides*. The dominant reactionary policy was developed a whole stage further along its menacing path. But at the same time the rising new forces had developed so much further as to stamp their impress already on certain of the discussions. It was a reflection of the influence of the Unity Campaign and the whole previous twelve months in the history of the Labour Party that led to the concession in respect of the rights of the local labour parties. It was a minimum concession, the least that could be made ; but a stage had been reached when it was recognised that some concession had to be made. For the first time since 1918 the Constitution of the Labour Party was changed, not in a reactionary, but in a progressive direction. The precedent will be noted.

IT was further notable that this change was carried by the united support of the main body of the trade union and local labour party delegates, together with the Labour Party Executive, against the opposition of the extreme right wing group of leaders which, on the basis of powerful positions in some of the larger unions, had previously held unchallenged dominance. For the first time a breach was made in this domination, even though only on an organising issue. At Edinburgh the domination of this grouping had still been complete. At Bournemouth they found themselves for the first time on this particular issue in opposition and defeated. The surprise and discomfiture of Mr. Marchbank at this outcome was expressed in the *Railway Review*.

> Much to my surprise, a substantial majority vote approved the principle of group voting on the separate lists. . . . Whether these changes are wise, time alone will show. For my part, I gravely doubt both the wisdom and the propriety of making them. (J. Marchbank, *Railway Review*, October 8.)

Once again the precedent is important for the advance to the victory of real political life and socialist working class politics in the Labour Party.

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THE election of new forces, representative of the fight for working class unity and for a vigorous working class policy, to the Labour Party Executive has seized the popular imagination as the signal of change and beginning of a new order in the Labour Party. A great responsibility rests on these comrades, to whom wide masses are looking. They can perform a powerful constructive rôle in helping to develop the fight of the Labour Party, the fight on the basis of the issues of the Immediate Programme, the fight on the basis of the Spain Campaign resolution and other important decisions, and, above all, the strengthening of the fight against the National Government. Their election is not yet a change of policy ; but their activity can help to prepare the way for a change of policy. But it is essential for the main body of the membership of the Labour Party to remember, in order that there shall be no sudden disillusionments, that the decisive change of policy of the Labour Party has still to be realised, and that the fight for this can only be carried through by the mass of the membership.

WHICH of the two driving forces, of the two lines of development, revealed at Bournemouth will conquer ? Will Bournemouth be remembered as the decisive milestone on the path to war, to national unity of the Labour Party with the National Government on the basis of its arms policy, leading down the steep slope to support of imperialist war ? Or will Bournemouth be remembered as the first signal of the advance of new forces and new life in the Labour Party, leading to strengthened fight and confidence against the National Government, and beginning the transformation of the Labour Party destined to go forward to the realisation of working class unity. The answer to this question does not depend on passive analysis. It depends on the actual struggle and activity realised in the coming months. It depends on the rôle of every Labour Party member. Bournemouth holds out great dangers. It holds out great possibilities of advance. It rests with us to see that the possibilities of advance shall be realised and shall defeat the dangers.

R. P. D.

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TWENTY YEARS OF SOVIET POWER

By R. PAGE ARNOT

TWENTY years ago there opened a new epoch for mankind. We are told nowadays that there have been men of some sort on the earth for up to half-a-million years whose life and activity are subsumed under the heading of pre-history ; and that some 7,000 years ago with the domestication of animals and the first agriculture, history begins. But now we may say that yesterday's 7,000 years and all before them fall under one head and that only with the Russian Revolution does the history of mankind begin.

For hundreds of years men had dreamed of such a society as is now being built as a result of the great Socialist Revolution in the territories of the Soviet Union. Sir Thomas More in his *Golden Book*, Campanella in his *City of the Sun*, and many a one after that had so dreamed of the future. For over a century a growing working-class movement that as it grew was wedded to the conceptions of socialism had striven not only for its immediate needs, but for the ending of capitalist society and the building of a classless society. The struggle of the Chartists, the struggle of the generation that included William Morris and the fighters of the Dock Strike of 1889 found their fulfilment in the Revolution of 1917. The whole international working-class movement guided by the teachings of Marx and Engels had fought for the ending of the exploitation of man by man. 1917 was their victory, won by their heroic vanguard—the Russian working class and its party led by Lenin and Stalin, the inheritors of Marx and Engels.

The new epoch was attacked by all the forces of reaction. With one voice, writers and journalists of all countries and continents cursed the Soviets and prophesied their speedy downfall. Many Socialists, caught in the meshes of jingoism and liberalism, joined the chorus of condemnation. Fourteen governments sent their armies to strangle the infant soviets. After three years and more of Civil War, the Socialist Soviet Republics had to face attack after attack by intervention, espionage, wrecking, terrorism, right up to the present day. But despite all the attacks, the Socialist republics, now bound together in the Soviet Union, triumphed ; and in their triumph have given not only a presage, but a guarantee of the triumph of Socialism in every country of the world.

What that achievement has meant in actual fact would take volumes. Everywhere these days irrefutable figures and facts are being published

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which all may read. But everything achieved stands out all the more by contrast. At no time in the past of mankind has there been such a sharp contrast between two worlds. To realise this contrast is the first step not only to understand what has happened, but to better our own position.

Here was a backward country, a sea of agriculture with islands of industry. The agriculture primitive, the industry far behind Western Europe ; the people illiterate, crushed beneath the foul despotism of the Czardom—the " gendarme of Europe "—the " prison of the peoples."

On the other hand here was the United Kingdom, the oldest parliamentary country, its industry amongst the most advanced in the world, its people literate, its working class organised, its Factory Acts and social legislation far ahead of many of its rivals. Now, after twenty years what is the position ? In Britain the fight is still going on for shorter hours against a government which refuses to ratify the Washington Convention, against employers who keep the miners eight hours or more in the pit. Real wages are falling. Recent reports reveal the terrible ravages of underfeeding. There are two million unemployed, homes are still being broken up by the Means Test, speed-up in the factories has alarmingly raised the accident rate even in these last two years.

In the U.S.S.R. already for ten years there has been a seven-hour day, with six hours for miners and other such trades. Real wages have risen, have doubled and trebled. Non-contributory social insurance is available to all. The granaries are brimming with corn. The old down-trodden peasantry, by a change unparalleled, have in their collective farms become peasants of a kind the world has never seen before. There is no unemployment, there is no Means Test, above all there are no capitalists. Think of it ! No capitalists, no thieves of that kind whatsoever.

After twenty years in Britain the imperialist rulers are still holding down by force the subject peoples throughout the British Empire, are still refusing posts to qualified women because of their sex, or when they receive work, paying them less than men. The terrible condition of the youth of Britain is such that no one would dare to deny the shameful facts recorded in John Gollan's book. In the U.S.S.R., the nationalities have come alive, there is fraternity of the scores of the peoples that were crushed under Czardom, the age-long subjection of women is ended, and every post is open to them while no traveller however prejudiced but is bound to admit that the U.S.S.R. is the land of youth. Before the boy or girl born in Britain there looms the prospect of unemployment, uncertainty, a doubtful future. In the U.S.S.R. the future of the youth, with its illimitable prospects, is assured, certain, unhindered.

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All that has been won, all that has been built in these twenty years, is summed up in the Stalin Constitution of the new classless Socialist society, with its equal and unalienable rights of every citizen.

This is the result of the heroic struggle of millions of people guided by the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin and Stalin.

No wonder all over the world millions still in subjection look with admiration on these achievements. But in the year of the Twentieth Anniversary the world situation sharply recalls each one of us from mere wonder and admiration. Everything that was won had to be fought for. Everything that the rest of mankind would gladly have has still to be won by struggle. The best tribute of all to the achievement of the great Socialist Revolution is to join with the people of the U.S.S.R. in the struggle for democracy and peace, against fascism and war.

In the struggle for peace the Soviet Union has a proud record. That Congress of Soviets which took over power on 7th and 8th November, 1917, did not depart before it had passed the famous Peace Decree, thereby being the first government to put an end to the slaughter of the imperialist World War. Persistently and untiringly the Soviet Union has fought for peace. Ten years ago Maxim Litvinov put forward his proposal to the Disarmament Commission of the League of Nations for immediate general total disarmament. When it was rejected the Soviet Government continued to be the partisan of even the most partial disarmament. When the threat of fascism compelled increase of the defence forces of the Soviet Union, the whole world knew the Red Army was the defender of peace, the army of all peoples against the danger of war. The U.S.S.R. inside and outside the League of Nations has stood forth as the chief defence in the whole world of peace, of democracy, of the advance of mankind. Now the Chinese people, fighting against the Japanese aggressors, now the Spaniards in arms against the German and Italian fascist invaders have come forward to join the U.S.S.R. in the defence of peace—not peace in Spain, peace in China or peace in Eastern Europe as the British pharisees fondly imagine, but peace in Western Europe, peace in Britain. It is the U.S.S.R., it is Republican Spain and China that by their resistance to the fascist enemy are preventing London and Edinburgh and Cardiff from suffering the fate of Madrid, Guernica and Bilbao, of Shanghai, Nanking and Canton.

The only effective way by which the working class of Britain can play its part in the struggle for peace is by linking up with the working class of the Soviet Union, of China and Spain. But to do this it is necessary to have unity of all working-class organisations, unity which would immediately rally still stronger support from all supporters of peace in the struggle against war and fascism. There is no escaping this need for unity or hoping to exercise the danger of war by mere resolutions

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without deeds. The delegates to the Trade Union Congress who saluted the prowess of the International Brigade while they turned their backs on unity with the Communist Party without which the International Brigade would not have been built, showed an inconsistency which can only injure the struggle for peace.

When trade union leaders like Mr. Bevin attack the U.S.S.R. they are earning the thanks of reactionaries who know full well that these utterances reveal the hatred of Communists which will effectually prevent any thorough steps to resist fascism and reaction.

Not only peace, but all democratic rights and liberties won by generations of struggle are now in danger. Here again the U.S.S.R. has proved itself the foremost defender of the most genuine democracy. The dictatorship of the proletariat has been from the beginning a democracy for the majority of the people many times more real than the democracy existing in France, Britain or America. The Stalin Constitution now establishes on the basis of classless socialist society a suffrage that is free, equal, universal, direct.

Nevertheless, however short they may fall of this, however imperfect and vitiated by capitalist rule, the democratic rights and liberties won in Western Europe and America have to be fought for and maintained. Ever since 1917 there has been an increasing encroachment upon civil liberties in Britain. A whole series of acts from the Emergency Powers Act of 1920, the Trades Disputes and Trade Union Act of 1927 to the Sedition Act of 1934 and the Public Order Act of 1936 show the trail of successful reaction. Once again the significance of the 20th Anniversary for Britain in the sphere of democracy lies in the extent to which the contrast is seen and the danger is apprehended. Once again the best tribute to the achievements of the Stalin Constitution is to take up the fight for the needs of the mass of the people and against the encroachment of reaction.

In short, any appreciation of the Twentieth Anniversary to be anything more than gaping admiration must result in a determination to learn lessons from the U.S.S.R. in order to wage the struggle for peace and democracy against fascism and war.

One of the lessons which requires to be learned at the present time is the need to rally the whole people of Britain as a majority against the handful of reactionaries, millionaires, monopolists, landlords. Some would-be pure socialists think this a declension from the old principles on which the movement was built up internationally. Some raise their voice in the organ of the I.L.P., thinking they have found a chink in the armour of the Communists. It is the critics who have not mastered the old principles, who have not troubled to study and digest the teachings

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of Marx and Engels, the work of Lenin and Stalin. In point of fact one of the main weaknesses of the British Labour movement as of the other parties of the Second International, has been its narrow outlook which prevented it from rallying the mass of the people while maintaining the integrity of the working-class. The whole of the struggle of the Bolsheviks that had its origins more than 40 years ago has been marked by a strategy which combined the whole mass of the people under the leadership of the working class.

Such a strategy cannot be carried through except on the basis of class struggle, of a complete breach with the capitalists, a complete defence of working-class interests. This, too, was the mark that distinguished the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks in Czarist Russia and from MacDonald and the successors of MacDonald in the British Labour Movement to-day.

But the key lesson to be learned from this Twentieth Anniversary and the 20 years and more of struggle that preceded 1917 is the necessity of a revolutionary party of the working-class which, together with its brother parties of other countries, can alone conceive, apply and carry out unflinchingly this strategy.

Ninety years ago the programme of that Party, the Communist Party, was given in the Manifesto written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in which it was said of the Communists:

> They have no interests separate and apart from the proletariat as a whole . . . . they have the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

To strengthen the Communist Party of Great Britain, to support it and join its ranks as the organisation which can best defend democracy and peace against fascism and war, and which points the way to a free, Socialist Britain to-morrow, is the final lesson to be learned and applied by all who celebrate the Twentieth Anniversary.

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1917—1937 : ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

HARRY POLLITT

WE greet this 20th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution and are inspired by its achievements and triumphs in the 20 years of Soviet Power.

In spite of all attempts by capitalist powers and counter-revolutionaries inside Russia itself to hinder the developments of socialist construction, we have seen the strengthening of Soviet Russia, the industrial and cultural achievements, and we see in the U.S.S.R., the one Socialist country in the world, that the working class are capable of solving all problems which under capitalism are impossible of solution.

We have seen the development of Soviet industry and agriculture, the utilisation of the mighty resources of the Soviet Union to develop a new social system on the basis of which the whole people go forward to a new, happy, and joyous life, and are inspired to go forward along the same road that has led to their successes.

We have seen the development of aviation in the Soviet Union, not for purposes of war, but for peace, and we hail the conquest of the North Pole by the Soviet Airmen, and the magnificent flight to San Francisco acclaimed by the world.

We welcome the new Stalin Constitution which ensures to the Russian people complete and true democracy, and realise that only on the basis of Socialism is it possible for true democracy to be achieved for the people.

We welcome the Soviet Union's contribution to the cause of world peace, standing out like a beacon light in the midst of fascist and imperialist manœuvrings, and we realise that had it not been for the existence of the Socialist Fatherland, and the consistent stand it has taken in the interests of world peace, that the world might already have been plunged into war.

On this 20th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, in acclaiming with pride the achievements of Socialism, we pledge ourselves to defend the Soviet Union, for we realise that in defending the Soviet Union we are defending the future of world peace and democracy.

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EBBY EDWARDS

(*Secretary : Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain*).

THE miners, perhaps more than any other section of the British working class, have reason to feel proud of the Soviet Republic's achievements.

In the greatest industrial struggle of this country, the Soviet Union by the very nature of its workers' control could, and did assist the British miners in their hour of need. The Soviet Union gave generously, freely and unconditionally the necessary assistance for the women and children in the miners' fight against British Capitalism. Although eleven years have passed since that epic struggle took place, the wives of the miners in our villages still repeat their thanks.

That the Soviet Union can assist to prevent a world war is another factor that enforces the workers to give praise to her present controlling power. The Soviet Union is the only country to-day with no economic imperialist drive. This factor is not sufficiently recognised by the British workers in present world capitalist relations. To talk and write of national policy and defence related to present international disturbances, and ignore the Soviet Union within the approach to collective security is more than the height of folly. To consider peace, democracy, and social entities unrelated to the form of economic ownership is merely to end in verbal confusion. Nations to-day, either under Fascism or Monarchy, seeking to defend their possessions or extend their boundaries, are doing so as an alternative to solving their own internal economic problems, to solve their own internal problems in the interests of the mass would mean facing a change of their own system. Fascism is only a new name for a changed form of capitalist domination. The Soviet Union makes dominance within her own country to retain an economic order that is contradictory to capitalism. She is the only country in the world so placed. On this the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the Soviet Republics we have need to be thankful. She has maintained her changed form of economic life for her people, and is the great bulwark against the march of another imperialist war. The Soviet Union is a great ally for peace—Do we know it ?

G. D. H. COLE

AS a Socialist, I naturally regard the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the successful establishment and consolidation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics as by far the most important historical events that have occurred in my lifetime. Nor am I one of those who, when everything in the new and struggling Socialist community does not go just as they would like, turn their backs on the struggle and

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proclaim that the Revolution is being betrayed. Alas, men cannot make a new civilisation without growing pains, or liquidate an ancient tyranny without suffering. What heartens me is that, in face of vast difficulties—not the least of which has been the lack of understanding among Socialists in other countries—the Soviet Union has been strong enough to make the tremendous advances which we are celebrating this year.

NORMAN ANGELL

VERY many on this anniversary will rightly dwell on the magnitude of Russia's economic and political achievements. But the one fact which should at this juncture of international affairs prompt all civilised people, Communist or anti-Communist to wish Russia well, is this fact: that it is her power which stands to-day as an indispensable barrier to the destruction of the Western Constitutional States by the Fascist Dictatorships. The Italian Dictator said the other day that in a few years all Europe would be Fascist. If once Russia were destroyed and a Fascist government established in Moscow as the result of the technique of aggression which German-Italian intervention in Spain illustrates, that would not be a vain boast. It is one of the profound ironies of history that if that destruction of the Moscow government for which some British reactionaries still parley were to take place, it would be the end of the British Commonwealth as well as the end of the Western democracies.

GEORGE HICKS, M.P.

(*Woolwich East*).

(*General Secretary: Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers*).

I should like to pay my tribute to the Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Union of Russian Socialist Republics.

We see in the U.S.S.R. the peoples of a sixth of the world, who, having emerged from semi-feudal conditions, having overcome the frightful troubles and chaos of external war, civil war and revolution, are consciously and heroically working to establish Socialism.

There have been many obscure and mysterious happenings in Russia. Executions have taken place which have shocked many people. But we realise that the U.S.S.R. is surrounded by capitalist states which will refrain from no effort to destroy those Republics.

We do know, however, that despite everything, enormous progress has been made in the U.S.S.R. We do know that the material conditions of the people have been vastly improved; that a great industry has been established; that tremendous advances have been made in

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housing, in the medical and health services, in everything concerning the people's welfare. We do know that there has developed a most tender and solicitous care for women and children. We do know that gigantic strides have been made in education and in culture. We do know that unemployment has been abolished and that the people have a sense of security existing nowhere else in the world.

We do know that the hours of labour have been reduced from twelve a day to seven, and six in the most arduous employments. We do know that the workers there have holidays with pay, and that no effort is being spared to enhance their facilities for recreation and enjoyment. And we do know that, in a world where powerful forces are at work to engulf us all in the horrors of war, the U.S.S.R. has stood, and stands, as a mighty bulwark of Peace. Good luck, and continued progress, to the Russian Socialist Republics.

LUKE FAWCETT

(*Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers*).

I am glad to join in the tribute of praise and appreciation of our Russian comrades, of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., on the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Russian Socialist Republics.

We think that of old Russia—the Russia of the Czars—with its peoples sunk in abysmal ignorance and superstition, and in the depths of filth and poverty, bound by the chains of a terrible servitude. That old Russia—all a-glitter with barbaric wealth and pageantry on top, and gloom, darkness, muck and misery below. Gorki, Tolstoy, Chekor and other authors have pictured that for us with the art of genius.

And we think of the new Russia: the Russia that has arisen from out of the incredible chaos of war and revolution. The new Russia that exults the working people; that regards children as the flower of humanity; that has established the economic and social equality of women and men. The new Russia that has banished unemployment and thus removed the abiding fear that besets working people in the rest of the world. The new Russia that has reduced the hours of work by thirty per cent., given holidays with pay, created great health and medical services, made enormous strides in housing, that has abolished illiteracy and opened wide the fields of education and culture for all. If only for that no words can express the debt we owe. But that is not all. To-day the U.S.S.R. is possessed of a mighty industry. It has the material equipment of a great Power. It has, under the pressure of necessity, become a great armed Power. And we know that that Power will be used for Peace and Socialism, in a world tumbling into anarchy and war.

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The Russian Socialist Republics are a tower of strength to the working people of all countries, in their struggles for Peace and for the liberation of mankind from the evils, horrors and bestialities of decadent capitalism.

D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

(*Hammersmith North*).

AS I look back over the twenty most fruitful years of revolutionary history, I find it difficult to say which of the many outstanding marvels of Soviet achievement moves me most. Is it the spread of education? The industrial successes? The ultimate triumph of collective agriculture? The death of anti-semitism and similar mental symptoms of capitalist disease? The establishment of equality of the sexes? The founding of true freedom in the economic security of all workers? The further advance of freedom in the new Constitution? The elevation already in two decades of the mass of the people from the standards of the depressed classes of British India to those of Western Europe, on their way to a far higher standard? I think it is none of these that moves me most. What does is that the triumphant demonstration, confidently expected but none the less welcomed by Socialists, alarming and unwelcome to our enemies, that Socialism works in practice.

ALEX GOSSIP

(*General Secretary : National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association*).

WHEN one looks back on the history of Russia in Czarist days with all its cruelty, illiteracy and starvation for the great mass of the people, one cannot help being astonished at the tremendous progress which has been made there since the October Revolution of 1917, notwithstanding all the difficulties which have had to be surmounted, including the bitter antagonism of capitalist countries, and the allied efforts which were made after the Revolution to crush down the workers of the then struggling Soviet Republic.

The establishment of the U.S.S.R. is undoubtedly the greatest event the world has yet witnessed, and one can have no patience whatever with those carping critics who are continually trying to belittle the splendid efforts of our Russian comrades. They fix on little piffling things to criticise as if any reasonable individual could expect perfection in every respect, knowing old Russia and the lapse of a mere twenty years.

Hats off to the **U.S.S.R. and its great achievements !**

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ALFRED M. WALL

(*Secretary, London Trades Council*).

THE Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Soviet Union provides me with an opportunity to pay tribute to the immense power for world peace, which is Soviet Russia.

The Soviet Union does not want war. Their peoples passionately desire a prolonged, stable and honourable peace, if only for the rapid attainment of a new social order in their country. They are conscious that war will inevitably hold up the completion of their ideal.

Isolation is recognised by the Soviet Union as an impossible policy. They might well say "leave us alone to be masters of our own fate." But in order even to be "left alone" they must participate energetically in international affairs, especially in the struggle for lasting peace. Thus, the policy of the Soviet Union is one of the strongest pegs upon which hangs world organisation for peace.

Fascist dictatorships, conversely, are the storm centres from which aggression emanates. These dictatorships are irrevocably opposed to organised peace.

Therefore, for the sake of world peace, if for no other reason, we say "Long Live the Soviet Union."

JOHN JAGGER, M.P.

(*Clayton Division, Manchester*).

I desire to extend heartiest congratulations to my Russian comrades on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Revolution. Each successive visit I have paid to the U.S.S.R. has shown the marvellous strides being made both socially, economically and culturally. Protagonists may argue about whether our comrades are building up a socialist democracy on true Marxist lines, or whether the dictatorship of the proletariat is either good or necessary. I am content to leave them to their disputations. All I know is that I have seen a poverty-stricken and largely illiterate populace numbering one hundred and seventy million souls changed within two decades into a free, happy, healthy, educated and prosperous people.

Such a change for the better, on such a scale and in so short a time, has never happened before in the world's history. May this great experiment proceed from strength to strength.

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WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P.

(*West Fife*).

AFTER a lapse of four years I have re-visited Moscow. In that four years great changes have taken place. Great new thoroughfares have been opened up, and fine new construction works are everywhere in evidence.

The " Metro " is truly something to be proud of, and there is no doubt that the workers of Moscow are proud of their undertaking. We sailed along part of the course of the Moscow-Volga canal and saw for ourselves the difficulties that had to be overcome in order to link Moscow with the sea. But the job has been completed and already along the banks are the beginnings of what, before many years are passed, will be new flourishing cities.

In the Park of Rest and Culture we saw the workers, young and old, enjoying rest, recreation and education ; thoroughly appreciating and enjoying the abundance that is now rewarding their years of toil and endeavour.

Everywhere was evidenced a spirit of eager optimism and joy in life. The workers of the Soviet Union are building a great new world ; a world of plenty and of happiness such as workers have never known before. To complete this great task they must have peace.

With peace and the opportunity of continuing their work, they will, in a few years' time, have surpassed every country in the world. Peace is the great desire of the people of the Soviet Union. Peace is the desire of the workers of all lands. Therefore on the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution, let us all pledge our support to the heroic workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, to the cause of peace, for the defeat of Fascism and its policy of aggression, thereby ensuring not only the completion of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union, but a general advance of the workers of all lands.

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BOURNEMOUTH AND AFTER

By G. R. STRAUSS, M.P.

THE Bournemouth Conference may mark the turning point in the fortunes of the Labour Party. While there was little spectacular about it, there was an atmosphere of quiet determination and confidence in the future, significant after the long period of discontent and demoralisation in the local parties. The results show that the fight for greater vigour and militancy in our movement, the sacrifices made by the Unity Campaign and the Socialist League, have not been in vain.

The outstanding event of the Conference was the concession to the Constituency Parties of their demand to elect their own delegates to the Executive. It is doubtful even now whether the full implication of this change has been realised. For years past there has been a deep feeling among active workers that they were not getting a square deal. They shoulder the onerous responsibility of the day to day constituency work, not only the running of elections, Municipal and Parliamentary, but all the hum-drum and wearisome activities involved in keeping a local party alive and spirited. By terrific efforts they raise vast sums of money —far more than the sums contributed by the Unions to Transport House. Their direct contact with the electors enables them to interpret the political aspirations of the people and gauge which policies and tactics would most readily appeal to them. They realise that they are the political soul of the Party, and, while they fully appreciate the essential rôle which the Trade Unions play in the movement, they felt that they were being stifled by the power which the Constitution gave to the Unions. They were denied that influence on the policy and leadership of the Party to which they are entitled, and which is essential to the health of the movement. This sense of frustration came to a head at the Edinburgh Conference, when on resolution after resolution, on Spain, and even on the organisation of the League of Youth, and other purely constituency matters, the dead weight of the Union votes drowned the voice of the local parties.

The discontent was aggravated by the knowledge that the Union vote is an undemocratic one, in the sense that, with rare exceptions, Union members are not asked their views on the political questions that are to be decided. The direction in which the Union vote is cast lies in the discretion of the delegates to the Conference, who, on most issues, have no mandates, even from their own annual conferences, and can, at best,

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only claim to "interpret" the views of their immense and scattered membership. The local Party delegates are either mandated on matters of importance, or are sufficiently in touch with the members of their organisations to be able faithfully to reflect their opinions.

The crux of this unsatisfactory situation lay in the unfettered power of the Trades Union section of the movement to select the entire leadership of the Party. In the twelve months between Edinburgh and Bournemouth, the leadership, or rather the absence of effective leadership, caused widespread and intense dissatisfaction. The Unity Campaign persistently expressed this resentment and preached working class co-operation as the remedy. It gave strength and stimulus to the tide of healthy discontent that was rising against the betrayal of Spanish democracy, the support for the National Government's rearmament proposals, and the many other serious defects in the Party leadership. A simultaneous manifestation of the same opposition was the growth of the Constituency Parties movement, which was an organisational expression of the dissatisfaction voiced by the Unity Campaign. The demoralisation that was taking place among the rank and file of the Party, shown most clearly in the bye-election results, alarmed the Executive. They had to offer some appeasement. Hence the proposals for Constitutional reforms, which past Executives had sternly resisted. There can be no doubt that it was the Unity Campaign that forced this change of front.

These reforms were years overdue. Nevertheless, a few weeks before the opening of the Conference some of the Trade Union leaders, realising that their domination of the Party was challenged, began an opposition movement. They found themselves in a difficulty. In spite of their power, they appreciated that the political strength of the Party rested not with them but with the Constituency organisations. If they resisted obstinately these plainly justified demands, put forward with such unanimity and determination, they were in danger of splitting the Party in two. In the Conference, manœuvre and counter-manœuvre followed each other. In response to a direct threat from Ernest Bevin, the Executive subserviently climbed down and accepted his offer that the Constitutional reforms should be agreed upon, on condition that they should not be implemented till the next Conference in eighteen months time. Finally, after the interplay of obvious personal rivalry between the various Trades Union leaders, the Conference dramatically snatched the Executive back from its shamefaced retreat, and gave the Constituency Parties all they wanted.

The reforms promise to be of enduring importance. From now onwards, the Constituency Parties will be able to influence the leadership, not by the ponderous and difficult method of external pressure, but by

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the direct election of part of the Executive. Their influence is larger than their numbers—seven out of twenty-five—would indicate. Firstly, because the chosen constituency representatives are first class politicians, whereas the Unions do not normally put their strongest men on the Executive ; secondly, and more important, because the Trades Unions' representatives know that those elected by the Constituencies are the nominees of the active political movement, whose views in any critical matter it would be perilous to thwart. The position of the Constituency representatives is therefore one of very great strength.

It was significant of the temper of the Conference that amongst those elected by the local parties were two of the leaders of the Unity Campaign, plain proof of a desire that those who had been advocating a more militant leadership should be empowered to carry it into effect. In the Unity debate, just before the ballot, Morrison stated that the Executive would have to consider the expulsion of the Unity leaders from the Party. The response of the Constituency delegates to this threat was to make two of the threatened individuals members of the Executive !

The report of the Executive, opposing working-class unity, received, as was expected, the overwhelming support of the Conference. But the attitude of the delegates, in this and other debates, showed that while unity with other working class parties is not yet accepted as the right method of creating in the movement a virile and aggressive attack on the National Government, Fascism and War, they were nevertheless anxious that the objectives for which the Unity Campaign stood should be achieved. On the debate on the Executive's report, those who opposed it, Stafford Cripps, Laski, the N.U.D.A.W. delegate, and myself, all got a friendly hearing. We emphasised our determination to continue our advocacy of unity and to avail ourselves of our democratic right of voicing minority opinions within the Party. Morrison wound up for the Executive, in his best Conference style. His speech might not have looked so humourous and clever if anyone had been able to speak after him. He made useful play with the request of the Communists in Bethnal Green that the Labour Party should make an electoral agreement with the Liberals against the Fascist candidates at the forthcoming Borough Council elections. The desire of the Communist Party to make alliances with Liberalism, which is still regarded by all sections of our movement as equally our class enemy as Conservatism, antagonises Labour Party members who might otherwise support working class unity. Another argument which Morrison used effectively was the difficulty of achieving unity with the Communist Party and the I.L.P., when those two bodies are engaged in such bitter and desperate quarrels over P.O.U.M., Trotzkyism, and allied matters. The answer to these familiar points need not be repeated here.

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Labour's Immediate Programme and the Pensions Plan were passed by Conference without amendment. While many delegates were dissatisfied with the content of the programme, there was a feeling that its proposals were serious enough to rouse the electorate behind it and to constitute a fundamental challenge to capitalism. Its usefulness as a document will depend on whether the new Executive will look upon it merely as a programme to be pigeon-holed until the next General Election, or as the essential demands for which we must now start fighting with every means at our disposal.

The other debate of outstanding importance was that on Armaments. It arose on the adoption of the document issued by the National Council of Labour on Foreign Policy and the attitude to be taken by a future Labour Government to the Arms question. While it therefore did not specifically raise the question of our present policy on the Government's rearmament proposals, this was the chief topic of discussion, revealing the deep cleavage of opinion that exists on this matter in the party leadership. The best that can be said of the debate is that it leaves the issue open.

As is usual on these occasions, the pacifists, led by George Lansbury, who desire complete disarmament under all conditions, were well represented on the rostrum, and conveniently enabled the Executive spokesmen to direct their attacks against this small and vulnerable minority. The real opposition case was admirably put by Aneurin Bevan, who prefaced his remarks by an expression of regret that the two distinct arguments against support of rearmament under the National Government, the pacifist case and the socialist case, had become entangled and the debate consequently confused. Mr. Walker, replying for the Executive, advocated support of the present rearmament on the surprising ground that the National Government stands for democracy. His declaration that there was more democracy in the British Empire than anywhere else in the world was not unnaturally met with cries " India," and " Is this the Conservative Conference ? " It was noticeable that the Parliamentary leaders, Attlee, Morrison and Greenwood, who in such questions have hitherto invariably been the Executive spokesmen, sat silent throughout the debate.

The resolution on Spain, demanding the restoration of the right of the Spanish Government to buy arms, gave rise to some criticism of the Party's inactivity during the past year on this question. The criticism was not so sharp as it might have been a few months ago, in view of the changed attitude of the Executive and the satisfactory nature of the actual resolution before the Conference. Here again the delegates felt that now that the Constitutional changes had been made it was pointless to harp

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on last year's failures, but rather to rely on the new Executive carrying out the wishes of the movement both in the spirit and the letter.

Indeed, were it not for the victories gained by the left in the early stages, the Conference would have been far more acrimonious and divided. As it turned out, the atmosphere became daily more encouraging and confident, in spite of the many differences of opinion. Delegates were impatient with the discussions of the past, and were only interested in the future—a future which they plainly wanted to be very different from the past. Time will tell whether the hopes roused at Bournemouth will be fulfilled. If they are not, it will be the greatest tragedy in the history of the British working class, for, with world events moving so fast, Labour cannot afford to waste another year in demoralisation and retreat. The chance has come for a new start, and it is the duty of all socialists in the Party to rouse their fellow members to a realisation of their opportunity, and the necessity of throwing their whole weight behind the representatives they have elected on to the National Executive.

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WAR IN THE FAR EAST: AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

By PROFESSOR SHELLEY WANG

[*In this article, specially contributed to the* LABOUR MONTHLY, *Professor Wang explains the undeclared war in the Far East from an international viewpoint. It is complementary to another article of his, published in the October number of the "Left News," in which he dealt with the situation from the Chinese domestic angle.*]

1. *A National As Well As an International Issue.*

TO all Chinese the present undeclared war which Japan is waging on Chinese soil is a purely national issue. It does not involve merely one class or one political group alone, but the Chinese nation as a whole, which is facing the danger of annihilation. As such, it follows that the war affects the destiny of every Chinese man, woman and child.

To the world, however, the war is a capital international issue. In the first place, let us not forget the two phenomena which arise from the criminal operation of fascism. The first is that fascism, with its inherent social conflict, cannot but create a situation which will drive itself to launch a war of aggression, in flagrant violation of treaties and pacts, deliberately breaking world peace, flaying the principles of collective security and permitting the feeling of insecurity and fear to stalk through the world. Secondly, one fascist power, due to its own potential aggressiveness and its preparation for invasion, must support and justify the policy of aggression of another fascist power, in order that it may itself escape censure or condemnation when invading the territory of another state. It is a recognised fact that fascist ambition is insatiable. This is due to the inability of fascism to solve the fundamental social conflicts inherent within that economic system.

That Japanese-militarist fascism is no exception to this is vividly reflected in the notorious Tanaka Memorandum submitted by the Japanese Prime Minister, Baron Tanaka, to the Imperial Throne as early

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as 1927. He outlined the proposed positive policy which Japan must pursue in the Far East in the following words: "Japan cannot remove the difficulties in Eastern Asia unless she adopts a policy of 'blood and iron.'" Consequently, if "blood and iron" has been chosen to be Japan's formula for the promotion of a national policy, then war must be regarded by Japan as her sole and most effective machinery to promote her policy.

The Memorandum further sketches a plan of endless wars to carry out the following objective. "In order to conquer China, we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world we must first conquer China. If we succeed in conquering China the rest of the Asiatic countries and the South Sea countries will fear us and surrender to us, then the world will realise that Eastern Asia is ours and will not dare to violate our rights." It continues, "having China's entire resources at our disposal we shall proceed to conquer India, the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Central Asia and even Europe. But to get control of Manchuria and Mongolia is the first step, if the Yamato race wishes to distinguish itself in continental Asia."

Japan has already annexed Manchuria, Jehol and Chahar. Now North China, with its immense territory, rich mineral resources and fertile plains, is being torn from China.

Side by side with Japan stand her fascist allies who support her action on every conceivable pretext. On October 9 the Italian Ambassador, Senor Auriti, gave the Tokyo Foreign Office an assurance of Italian support of Japanese aggression in China. He said: "Italians unanimously regard Japan's measure of self-defence in China as justified." (From the *People*, October 10, 1937.)

The steaming of Japanese battleships into Chinese waters, the invasion of Chinese territory by Japanese forces, when Japanese bombs and shells fall on non-combatants, innocent men, women and children, the fascists call these atrocious crimes Japan's measure of self-defence.

The motive behind this tissue of perfidious lies is the fact that in justifying their fascist accomplices to-day, they will escape condemnation for their aggression to-morrow. The first round of fascist aggression started from China, spreading through Abyssinia, the Rhineland and Spain. And now the second round is in full swing on a larger scale restarting from China. If all China should be the victim of conquest, who will be the next? Will it be India as envisaged in the Tanaka Memorandum? Will the fascists in Europe look on with complacency at such ease of conquest, or will they imitate Japan's example again when they see how easily Japan has escaped with absolute impunity?

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Another reason why Japanese invasion of China is an international issue is the folly of certain Powers who dream that they can bargain with Japan to refrain from invading their colonies or infringing their interests. The lesson of Manchuria, when British and American oil interests were thrown overboard in order that Japan might establish her oil monopoly, is one too conclusive to be ignored. In the war areas British interests, trade and enterprise have suffered considerably. Should China or North China fall into Japanese hands these occupied areas will be, without the least doubt, closed to foreign interests.

While the working class is not concerned with the protection of capitalist interests, it feels itself bound by a bond of international solidarity with the oppressed and exploited peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. In all wars it is the working class who are the victims. Consequently, the working classes of the world, together with the oppressed masses of China, are now facing a common problem, a common danger, and a common fight against fascism and war. It is for this reason also that the undeclared war in China is not merely a national, but an international issue, involving the working classes of the world.

2. *International Repercussions.*

All the peace-loving and democratic people of the world, especially the oppressed people and toiling masses in capitalist and colonial countries, have promptly come out in support of China. The Indian National Congress has passed a resolution, declaring for a boycott of Japanese goods throughout India. The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada issued a statement calling on Canadian labour to boycott Japanese goods and on the Canadian Government to place an embargo on shipments of goods to Japan, particularly on those goods meant for the manufacture of arms. There is also a strong boycott movement in the Straits Settlement and the Dutch East Indies, where the Chinese community have lived in peaceful and friendly relations with the native population and played a very active part in the domestic trade of the country. Also large sums of money have been raised there and sent to China. It is of special significance that the working class all over the world took the lead in the attempt to stop this war of aggression. On September 10, the British T.U.C. passed an emergency resolution, condemning Japan and pledging support of the organised workers to all *practical measures* that can be taken by the British Government under treaty obligations to China, in *obtaining the necessary means for its defence and to re-establish the sanctity of treaties* which Japan has signed but has since broken. The Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth and the Communist Party of Great Britain have also passed similar resolutions. The Communist Party is particularly active in organising meetings, raising funds, passing

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resolutions and conducting protest demonstrations to the Japanese Embassy. It is obvious that although the labour movement in England has been divided, here is an issue on which a common front could be formed.

Not only in this country, in the United States, too, the American Federation of Labour, in its annual Convention on October 8, passed a resolution calling for a boycott. Mr. Louis Dolivet, Secretary of the International Peace Campaign, who has been in close touch during the last three weeks with hundreds of organisations in more than 40 different countries, said that an organised and orderly movement is emerging, supported by the millions of the world masses. Governments in both Europe and America are being pressed to make a boycott effective, to " recognise the wave of feeling which is showing itself against a country which has flouted international law." (Interview with the *News Chronicle*, October 19.)

In France, he stated, 5,000,000 members of the trade unions, 2,500,000 in the co-operative societies, 3,000,000 ex-servicemen and 1,500,000 peasant families are all agreed on demanding a boycott by the French Government to assist the Chinese People. In Holland, 1,500,000 people, members of organisations affiliated to the I.P.C., have announced their intention of joining the movement of pressing the Dutch Government for immediate action. In Scandinavia, in the central European countries and in South America, the same spirit has shown itself.

It is highly significant that President Roosevelt, following the increased casualties resulting from Japanese indiscriminate bombing of non-combatants and civilians, decreed forbidding state-owned vessels to sail to the Far East. And in Chicago, he drew attention to " the present reign of terror and international lawlessness which has now reached the stage where the very foundations of civilisation are seriously threatened." Echoing President Roosevelt's call, Mr. Eden, in Llandudno, said (on October 15), " for our own part you may be sure of this, we will co-operate heartily with those who go there (meaning the Nine-Power Conference in Brussels) to work in the spirit of President Roosevelt's declaration."

On the other hand an appeal to " keep cool " over Japan and a condemnation of sanctions or a trade boycott has been pronounced by Sir Geoffrey Clarke, Vice-Chairman of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, at the annual meeting of the Association in Manchester on October 14. He said : " I should like to say that if ever there was a time for us to keep absolutely cool and to avoid rash decisions that time is now." Is it not evident that by " keeping cool over Japan " people are waiting the day when all of North China may fall. Although this opinion is held only by a minority, it is not taken lightly by the Government,

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despite opinion to the contrary which is shared by the overwhelming majority of the British people.

From statements by President Roosevelt and Mr. Chamberlain it appeared that the first step to be taken by the Conference in Brussels would be " mediation " and " peaceful discussion." China is not averse to mediation and peaceful discussion ; on the contrary China favours them, provided Japanese air, land and marine forces are altogether withdrawn from Chinese territory. If the effort to restore peace which is broken by Japan, will be made at the expense of an inch of Chinese territory, the Chinese Government and the Chinese people will certainly oppose it. A Chinese Government, which endorsed a weak-kneed policy, could not stand.

It is therefore clear that on the one hand the masses, intellectuals, the working class and religious people of the world are agreed on the taking of practical measures which will stop this undeclared war ; it appears also that on the other hand the capitalists and the Governments are blind to their own interests and are inclined to persuade or coerce China into giving way rather than to assist her, seeking an impossible peace, however unequitable be the terms and whatever be the cost to China. If this tendency cannot be overcome in time, the future is black indeed ! The dark forces of world anarchy would with greater audacity dash out to wreck world peace.

3. *Japanese Policy and China's Resistance.*

For seven years China has been a perpetual victim of Japanese aggression and predatory policy. She has learnt much. She has learnt that sheer sympathy alone will not stop Japanese invasions. On the contrary, the failure of translating sympathy and protest into concrete action has merely emboldened Japan to go on with her crimes, impervious to universal condemnation which she holds in utter contempt.

The Japanese militarist fascists counted upon an emulation of their rapid victory in Manchuria in 1931. When they met with a stout resistance in North China they attacked Shanghai, obviously to threaten the Chinese Government in Nanking. By so doing Japan menaces the many commitments of the Western Powers in the Shanghai area. When the Japanese attack on Shanghai was repulsed, Japanese planes indiscriminately bombed Nanking, Canton, Hankow and other open towns and villages, to " bring China down to her knees." This failed to break the high morale of the Chinese population and troops. What did she do next to gain that rapid victory she desired so much ? Japan used the most inhuman and illegal form of warfare—*Poison Gas !* Launching a big drive on every front, Japan has had recourse to the use of poison gas in

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Shanghai on more than three occasions. (*The Times*, October 9.) It is evident that before the Far East Conference meets in Brussels, Japan intends to face the Conference with a *fait accompli*, by :

1. Driving all Chinese troops out of North China.
2. Pushing the Chinese army from its Shanghai area, at least back to the line indicated in the Shanghai Armistice Agreement of 1932 in which " nothing implies any permanent restriction on the movements of Chinese troops in Chinese territory." (Letter of the Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Quo Tai-Chi, appearing in *The Times*, October 11.)

When such a situation has been brought about, negotiation for peace and mediation is just what is desired by Japan. After all, Tokio has calculated that the Powers, faced by a *fait accompli*, will only be able to restore peace solely at the expense of China, *i.e.*, the cession of North China to Japan. This will give another precedent in the future. Another Japanese aggression, another *fait accompli* and another Brussels Conference and the rest of unconquered China will have been annexed !

China is united. It is impossible to beat a united China " down to her knees." The Chinese people and soldiers are putting up a resistance which surprises not only the world but even the Japanese themselves. Japanese advance on all fronts has been generally slow. At Shanghai, it has been checked by the main armies of the Central Government equipped with modern arms and fighting a positional battle. In the North West, the National Revolutionary 8th Army, formerly the Chinese Red Army, though without modern equipment, has harassed the Japanese in the rear by tactical guerilla warfare, inflicting considerable damage.

Fighting, taking place in these two fronts, has been continuously severe and bitter. On the night of October 14, the Chinese troops in the Shanghai sector took a violent counter-offensive, pushing its way from Chapei into Hongkew ; the Japanese were completely taken by surprise. If after two months' fighting, China could still take the offensive with success, it is certainly not flattering to Japanese boasts of prowess in war and to Japanese military prestige. The *Observer* (October 17) commented : " The Eighth Route Army—the Chinese Communist Army which joined forces with Nanking recently—has struck in North Shansi. . . . The Communists have cut off 50,000 men, forming the advanced forces of the Japanese Army striking to the north of Taiynan (capital of Shansi province) from their base of supplies. These Japanese troops are said to be facing annihilation."

If this army, the former Chinese Red Army, ill-equipped but endowed with the highest fighting spirit and degree of mobility, could not secure

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modern weapons to equip themselves as the Chinese troops in the Shanghai war zone, yet it can still reckon upon the support of the masses. It could arm and teach the peasants all over the country the intricate rudiments of guerilla warfare which it has learnt at great and bitter expense in the past.

The more Japanese bombs and shells rain upon our women and children, the more indignant will be the people, and the more will they be driven to defend their material and cultural life to the last. In short, even if Japan, with or without the approval of the Powers, wished to impose a disgraceful peace on China, on Japanese terms, it is clear that China will not lay down her arms until an equitable peace has been restored. It will be war to the bitter end !

4. *Sanctions.*

China will fight with or without foreign assistance. We have learnt not to depend entirely on the help from others, though we expect it. The people all over the world are beginning to understand that sooner or later they must take sides. President Roosevelt recognised it when, in his great Chicago speech, he declared : " The peace-loving nations must make a concentrated effort in opposition to these violations of treaties and the ignorance of human instincts which are to-day creating that international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality."

Is it not time that other democratic Powers fully realised that " isolation or neutrality " is no longer possible ? Is it not common sense to grasp the fact that collective security has no meaning in the face of aggression if all other nations stand in " isolation or neutrality," or will only move when they are themselves immediately menaced or their interests directly threatened ? If collective security is to be made effective what will be necessary to do it ?

I learn that certain diplomats advised the Chinese delegation to the League of Nations not to appeal for the application of Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant. " You will kill the League," they said, " if you appeal for sanctions." Sanctions, however, are the only way out of this dilemma of world anarchy brought about by wanton aggressions. Sanctions are the very pillars of collective security.

Sanctions can stop the war. Continued supplies of oil, cotton, and other materials, help Japan to go on with the slaughter of Chinese men, women and children. Loans help Japan to carry on her undeclared war on China. All trade with Japan means assisting her in getting the means of taking heavier toll of lives in China. But the full application of sanctions, if they were enforced rigidly and faithfully, will bring Japan

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" down to her knees." Pacifists oppose sanctions for fear that they will lead to war. On the contrary, sanctions will stop war. Sanctions will restore peace. Sanctions did not stop the Abyssinian War because no real sanctions were applied.

How could sanctions be applied most effectively ? It is not enough, nor is it reliable, to leave the application of sanctions in the hands of the industrialists, financiers and capitalists, as they are blind even to the future menace to their own interests. It is also not enough to leave sanctions in the hands of Governments, as President Roosevelt's " mediation " and Mr. Chamberlain's " peaceful discussion " sound most ominous.

Sanctions can be applied most effectively only by the pressure of the masses on their governments. The breakdown of the Brussels Conference will merely give fresh encouragement and impetus to the aggressor. Action by the working class in a refusal to load and unload cargoes to and from Japan would paralyse Japan's foreign trade. If the governments failed to apply sanctions, still the working class of all the nations could unite to make sanctions actual and effective to stop Japanese barbarism.

Britain now holds the key to peace. She occupies a position which could tip the balance in the Far East. The strong British Labour Movement, which has achieved unanimity in the Chinese question, ought to take upon itself the task of seeing that the British Government will adopt an effective policy which will restore peace and justice in the Far East.

The Chinese people, with or without international assistance, are fighting and will continue to fight to the bitter end. The sympathy which is extended them by the world, and the world movement towards a boycott of Japanese goods have greatly heartened them, although they also realise that sympathy alone cannot hasten their victory nor diminish the massacre of men, women and children by bombs, shells, dum-dum bullets and poison gas. That sympathy, translated into action, may yet be the strategic weapon for the defeat of Japanese militarist-fascism, for the setting back of fascist aggression in Europe, and for securing a resounding victory for world peace.

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GYMNASTICS AT GENEVA

By A LEAGUE OBSERVER

THE League Assembly which ended on October 6 showed that there would still be a future for the League of Nations as an obstacle to war, provided that Great Britain and France intended to offer any resistance at all to the aggressor *bloc*. The very qualified and limited show of fight they made at the Nyon Conference of Mediterranean Powers against piracy was sufficient to put more life into the League than it has had since the beginning of the Ethiopian War.

This was the new feature at Geneva ; and it needs to be stressed, because obscuring it would conceal the beneficial effects of repelling the aggressor. The scandalous and disgraceful features of the 18th Assembly do not thereby lose any of their significance—neither the cowardly failure to re-elect Spain to the Council, at a time when she was being attacked by the League's worst enemies ; nor the failure to secure unanimity for a resolution on Spain publicly sponsored by Great Britain, France, the U.S.S.R., the Scandinavian, the Baltic and the Balkan countries ; nor the pusillanimous phrasing of the resolutions themselves, both on the Spanish and on the Chinese appeals.

But these defeats for the League are in their turn due in the long run to the hesitations of the two Powers chiefly responsible for what the League does and fails to do. And, more important, they represent nothing new at Geneva. We have become accustomed to them for nearly two years now—ever since the shameful retreat before the oil sanction and the abandonment of Ethiopia. What was important this time was the new element. For the first time Geneva has in a small way—and not always by the goodwill of those mainly responsible—justified Litvinoff's remark : " Better a League without universality than universality without League principles."

The new tendency began to make itself felt before the Assembly actually met, when the British and French reaction against Italian piracy grown too impudent was already becoming apparent. The Committee on the problem of raw materials (September 1—4) spent the greater part of its time discussing whether, in the name of the abstract right of all countries to buy rubber, tin and cotton, it was advisable to finance purchases of these and other war materials by Hitler, Mussolini and the allies. The Soviet delegate fought an almost lonely fight : with the

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chairman of the committee, supported by the " askaris "—as the camp-followers of the aggressor Powers are currently called here—constantly threatening resignation if " politics are dragged in." The British expert Leith-Ross gave his Soviet colleague very occasional and wavering support. But that was sufficient to prevent the final report of the Committee becoming a recommendation to finance the aggressor, as influential people at Geneva had planned.

Immediately afterwards—on the eve of Nyon—followed the Economic Committee of the League, with some of those present who had been in the other Committee. Here matters went more smoothly. It would have been difficult for anyone, by that time, to defend the thesis that economic co-operation is possible with States for whose rulers it is only a means of promoting more successful external brigandage and annexation. M. Stücki, the Swiss chairman of the raw materials committee, himself got up amid the smiles of the Economic Committee to admit that his views had changed on the interdependence of politics and economics. The final report of the Committee (September 10) reflected the change very noticeably.

Then came the Nyon Conference, at which for the first time, after fourteen months of unpunished Italian and German invasion of Spain, certain limited measures for restraint of the aggressor were decided upon (September 14 and 17). Everyone understood that this was not because the British and French Governments had become any more accessible to the moral implications of their solemn engagements under the Covenant of the League of Nations. The " unknown pirates," by threatening the security of British and French naval communications, had overstepped the limits of what was lawful and decent. Nevertheless, the big fact was that, for the first time since longer than anyone could remember, someone had told the all-powerful firm of Mussolini, Hitler and Co. that they could not have it all their own way. The fact that the Soviet Union had done the same on the eve of the Conference, in much clearer language, was now recalled with gratitude, rather than with the acid criticism which at first greeted the Soviet Note to Italy.

This was the atmosphere in which the Assembly opened. Naturally enough, all the careful-laid plans for " settling " the Ethiopian question at the very outset—by some ambiguous piece of chicanery in the Credentials Committee which would have the practical effect of excluding Ethiopia from the League of Nations—were dead in these circumstances before ever they could be produced. Such a gratuitous encouragement to Italy would have been plain madness. Great was the astonishment of at least one Balkan diplomat, whose Government is notoriously subservient to Mussolini, when a stone wall of French and British opposition

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suddenly rose up before his " formula " for recognising the Italian conquest of Ethiopia without mentioning either the land or the crime.

On equally deaf ears fell the plea of the Chilean delegate, M. Edwards, repeated at the Assembly, at its General Committee and at the " Committee of Twenty-Eight "—the committee for studying the application of the principles of the Covenant—that, as a first step to bringing absent friends into the League, they should be asked immediately on what terms they would be kind enough to return, or to come in. Events in Ethiopia in Spain and in China were sufficiently fresh in everyone's memory, and everyone was sufficiently aware of the slight stirring of dry bones in Whitehall and at the Quai d'Orsay, for the absurdity of the Chilean proposal not to be evident.

The Second Committee of the Assembly, which deals with economic and financial problems, had before it the reports mentioned earlier, in addition to other matters. It had no difficulty at all in adopting a resolution, which significantly enough, had been submitted to its reporter jointly by the representatives of Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R., roundly declaring that economic co-operation was unthinkable without political co-operation (contrary to the line deliberately taken the previous year), and that both depend on the " renunciation of the use of violence and war as an instrument of policy, and on the strict fulfilment of international obligations " (September 29).

Two days before, the Advisory Committee on the Sino-Japanese conflict—the Committee of Twenty-three—had been emboldened in a special resolution, not only to condemn the inhuman massacres of the Chinese civil population by the Japanese aeroplanes, but actually to mention the nationality of the criminals. It was interesting to compare the attitude of the small States who make up the bulk of the League membership, on this occasion, with their attitude a week before, when the voting had been taking place on Spain's application for re-election to the Council. The spokesman of the British Government had suddenly made known, on the very eve of the poll, that Great Britain was not against Spain's re-election. This had taken everybody by surprise, as no one could have suspected it (putting the case mildly) from the general attitude of the British Government ; and most delegates already had their instructions how to vote. The result was the defeat of Spain, with the British delegation looking grieved and talking in corners about " a defeat for us." Apparently the delegates resolved not to make this mistake again, and the chance came after the very strong and sympathetic speeches made in open committee by Lord Cranbourne and M. Delbos, in reply to the Chinese complaint about the bombing of open towns by the Japanese.

When, therefore, in the privacy of the drafting committee, the British and Australian delegates suddenly began finding all kinds of reasons why

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Japan should not be mentioned by name, while the French delegate sat silent, there was a regular " revolt " of the other States, in which New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland all played an active part—not to mention, of course, the U.S.S.R. and China itself—and finally the representatives of the Anglo-Saxon Commonwealth were " rescued," much against their will, from their fright at the spectacle of their own unwonted temerity. The result was nothing if not beneficial to the prestige of the League, since for one thing it led immediately to the first direct and public association of the United States with a League pronouncement in the present crisis of international relations.

It was the discovery that the heavens did not fall at such a daring challenge to the wrath of the Samurai, coupled with continued pressure from both inside and outside the Assembly, that led to the comparatively strong resolution on aid for China at the end of the Assembly. The League itself does not undertake to do anything for China immediately. But instead of washing its hands of China's complaint, as in the last resolutions on Ethiopia last year and in all the resolutions on the Spanish war of independence during the twelve months up to the Assembly, the League has at all events condemned Japan, recommended against so-called " neutrality " and given its endorsement to the furnishing of aid to China.

However, even on the Spanish appeal the League Assembly had produced positive results. The significant thing—the new element—was not that, taking advantage of the rule of unanimity, one of the enemies of the Spanish Republic, open and avowed, and the colony of another, had been encouraged by the refusal of the British and French delegates in the drafting committee either to name Italy or formally to recognise her aggression, and has ventured to resist the public condemnation of themselves and their august ally, and to vote against the resolution. That the aggressors and their campfollowers have always been encouraged by signs of vacillation on the part of Great Britain and France is an old story nowadays. The new feature was that, after three days of stormy discussion, the Assembly had submitted to it on October 2nd, and the British, French and Soviet delegations found a common ground in supporting a resolution which, for all its half-heartedness, did in effect record the failure of the policy of so-called " non-intervention "—in reality, of trying to buy off the aggressor at Spain's expense. It did recognise the existence of Italian armies on Spanish territory, and it did admit the necessity of fixing a limit for the discontinuance of this outrageous act of aggression.

That this new feature meant something in practice was shown by the frankness with which spokesmen of both the British and French delegations declared in the lobbies, after the vote, that they considered the resolution to be morally binding upon them, since in fact the support

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of 32 members of the League, and decisive members at that, had been secured for a step they had pledged themselves to take in any case. Whether they will continue faithful to this resolute spirit, in the critical hour at which these lines are being written, is another story. No one in Geneva (regrettable but true), would be surprised if they wilted once again. But it remains a fact that it was sufficient for them to display the least sign of the spirit of resistance to the aggressor, for the League to be able to rally an effective and ultimately irresistible majority to the principle of solidarity with the aggressor's victim.

Thus the League Assembly this time did actually bring with it a chain of rebuffs to the aggressor States, and there were few journalists last week who, when asked by their newspapers to summarise its results, did not remark on the new signs of life at Geneva.

There were, of course, other reasons contributing to the change. One found, in talking to journalists and diplomats from all over the world, an innocent surprise that, after all the information about the internal troubles of the U.S.S.R., those troubles did not seem to be weakening either the emphasis or the weight with which that country speaks in the world's counsels. Litvinoff's speech at the Assembly, and the fight of the Soviet delegate in the Spanish and Chinese discussions, played a tremendous part. They prevented the stifling of the Spanish and Chinese complaints in sub-committee, and they forced the British and French delegations more than once to toe the line.

A second factor was the awakening of the small States when brought to the extreme brink of danger, representing in a way the alarm of the broad mass of public opinion in face of the manœuvres of the Great Powers. The " revolt " over Japanese air bombing was one symptom. Another was the acceptance by Belgium of membership of the Council, with all that that implies, after a year of " neutrality " talk, behind which lies the real fear of being abandoned in an hour of peril. A third sign was the championship of clarity in the resolution on Spain by the delegates of Yugoslavia and Ecuador—Yugoslavia, whose Government's intrigues with the Nazis are notorious, and Ecuador, which earned unenviable notoriety in 1935 by its desertion of sanctions against Italy.

The late, half-hearted, unwilling but still marked symptoms of a change of policy on the part of the British and French Governments—or, to be more cautious, of a change in the direction in which their vacillating policy was moving—was, nevertheless, the factor which made it possible for other influences to take effect. How that factor is going to work in the immediate future is important for the fate of more, naturally, than the League of Nations. But the League has in recent years been paying a very heavy price for the impunity which has been so long granted to

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the aggressors. It went on paying the price during the Assembly as well. But the *tempo* of payment slowed down very noticeably, under the influence of the factors described above. It depends in large measure on public opinion in Great Britain that " Paid " should be written under the account for good in the near future.

* * * * *

The above was already in the post when the doubts expressed as to British and French intentions were shown to be thoroughly justified. Diplomatic history in recent years affords few examples of such an unblushing confidence-trick as has been played on Spain. And the damage it has done includes the undoing of the little advance made towards the revival of confidence in collective security.

During the discussions on the Spanish resolution, the one concern of the British and French delegations was to prevent the Spaniards from coming forward in the full Assembly with a draft resolution of their own, in which the Italian and German aggressors would be mentioned by name, the well-known facts of their aggression cited, and the conclusions drawn as to the protection to which Spain is entitled under the League Covenant. Such a draft, against any of the non-committal platitudes which the French and British delegations were willing to sponsor, would have been a deadly challenge to them. If they opposed it they would be renouncing for good their claim to be loyal to League principles. This would be a situation which would have its inconveniences at election time, and which also meant the deathblow to the League itself—the League which might still play a part in serving the ends of British and French policy. If on the other hand they supported such a Spanish draft, goodbye to the fascinating game of playing Hitler and Mussolini off against the rest of Europe, which Great Britain has been playing ever since Hitler took Germany out of the League, as a preparation for wars of conquest, in 1933.

The British and French delegations accordingly moved heaven and earth during the sessions of the sixth (political) committee of the Assembly and of its drafting committee, to prevent matters coming to such a pass. They persuaded the Spaniards not to put forward a draft of their own, as a sign of the genuine readiness of the Spanish Government not to create difficulties. They secured the help of Blum, who as everyone knew was not even a member of the French delegation, to come to Geneva and make an impassioned plea—at the drafting committee—to the Spaniards, not to spoil the chances of negotiations with Italy : rightly calculating that the voice of the leader of the French Socialists would weigh more with the Spanish delegates than that, say, of Walter Elliott. That the rank and file of the French Socialists had not given Blum any mandate for such an action, which was in fact a defiance of the spirit of the resolution on ending non-intervention adopted at the Marseilles Congress

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of the French Socialist Party in May, naturally did not trouble many people at Geneva. And then, when the Spaniards still were reluctant to put their faith in kind words to the aggressor, the supreme effort was made.

Speaking deliberately, and in the presence of numerous witnesses—thanks to whom, as usual in Geneva, what might have remained an ugly secret became public knowledge in approximately three hours—Delbos, the French Foreign Minister, assured Del Vayo that the British and French Governments were even now drafting the Note to Italy proposing tripartite conversations to secure the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain ; that this time they were determined that there should be no further prevarication of delay ; that the Note would be sent at the end of that very week ; and that the " brief delay " mentioned in the draft resolution which they were asking the Spaniards to accept would in fact involve only such time as was necessary to establish whether the Italians really meant to agree to withdrawing the troops. Eight or ten days was the period mentioned. At the end of this time, if there were no improvement in the situation, the French Government was ready to take drastic measures ; and Del Vayo would understand what that meant.

In diplomatic conversations, unfortunately, it is not usual to do what a vulgar trade union delegate would have done, and say : " I should like to have that in writing if you don't mind,"—though eyewitnesses assert that comrade Del Vayo looked as if the words were struggling to pass his lips. But when the representative of one of the greatest Powers in the world virtually gives you the word of honour of his Government ; when that Government claims to be based on the People's Front ; and when Walter Elliott immediately follows up with the statement that he desires to associate himself with what has been said by Delbos—there is a reasonable ground, at any rate, for believing them. It is hardly necessary to add that the unofficial spokesmen of both delegations were loud in their affirmations of what they were going to do to honour the pledge if the Italians did not accept.

The Spanish delegation accepted the assurances of Delbos and Elliott. They voted for the resolution. They were encouraged in their confidence by the statements made on behalf of both delegations after the adverse vote in the Assembly, as recounted earlier, that the resolution was still regarded as " morally binding " on the French and British Governments. Delbos and Elliott were able to leave Geneva without any awkward dilemma to face in the voting.

The sequel is public knowledge. The Note was sent. It was couched in such feeble terms that it constituted an invitation to the Italian brigands to reject it. The Italians did so—with the added contumely of an intimation that in future the other partner in the firm—Hitler—must be

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consulted. The British and French Governments took no action such as had been promised. Instead, they decided to refer the matter once again to the London Non-Intervention Committee, against the interminable delays of which the direct Note to Italy was supposed, and represented, to be the remedy.

A confidence trick of the first magnitude had been played on the Spaniards—of exactly the same nature, though infinitely greater in calibre, as that worked by any professional who leaves his victim, in exchange for a good round sum in Treasury notes, secure in the possession of a packet of blank paper which he fondly believes to be a wad of shares in the Bank of England. The tricksters were the French and British Governments. Their lively consciousness of the fact could not have been better illustrated than by the desperate efforts which each has since made to throw the blame on the other.

In reality, this point is not of great importance. It is a matter of common knowledge that the French Government has more than once let itself be hopelessly blackmailed (as at the very beginning of the system for helping Franco known as " non-intervention ") by the threat that otherwise the British Government will not stand by it at a moment of danger—a threat of emptiness of which its authors are well aware. It may well be that on this occasion, too, that group in the French Government which is headed by the Premier, Chautemps, was able to cow the other group in this way, and thus make things easier for the British Government, with which it was certainly in the closest touch.

At all events, the confidence trick was played. Of its direct consequences—the encouragement to Mussolini to send more troops and aeroplanes, the continued blockade of the Spanish Republic—it is hardly necessary to write ; they are so obvious. More soldiers of democracy will be killed by shell and bomb, more women and children must pay with their lives for the British and French Governments' tenderness towards their murderers.

But there is another aspect also which deserves consideration, and which is the subject of this article. The trick has immediately revived with full force all the doubts and hesitations in international politics about the real intentions of Great Britain and France. The immediate sufferer in this sphere is once again the idea of collective solidarity against an aggressor.

The Belgian Government starts away in terror at the results of its re-entry into the League system, and gratefully accepts (the words are those of the Belgian Government) a pledge from Germany to refrain from attacking Belgium if the latter fails to carry out its contractual

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obligations to the League. The Yugoslav Prime Minister, Stoyadinovich, whose Fascist sympathies are well known, once again refuses the French request to sign a pact of mutual assistance with his fellow member of the Little Entente—Czechoslovakia. The calculation in both cases is obvious and natural: when France and Great Britain won't even defend their own vital interests in the Mediterranean, to say nothing of such "ideological abstractions" as Spanish independence or their own pledged word, what chance of their help has a little one?

Equally striking is the reaction on the question of the Japanese war on China—itself the direct product of the "All clear" sign given to aggressors by France and Britain during the last twelve months. All the old suspicion of the Americans that Great Britain aims at manœuvring for a position when, as in 1931 during the attack on Manchuria, it can throw the blame for deserting China and its own League obligations upon the U.S.A., was alive when the Chinese appeal came before the League. The reception given to President Roosevelt's speech partly allayed it. But the "fast one" worked against the Spanish Republic has brought things back to where they started.

This, no doubt, does not in any way conflict with the immediate intentions of the British Government. Cynics are already talking about a new "Hoare-Laval" scheme for the Far East, under which Japan would be bought off by the cession of North China, with guarantees, of course, for foreign interests. The prospect for the League, however, slightly brightened for a while by gestures of resistance to the aggressor, is once again dismal unless there is an outbreak of public indignation on a massive scale in Great Britain, like that which brought Sir Samuel Hoare's career to a temporary check in December, 1935.

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LENIN AND GORKY

[*We continue this month the series of Lenin's Letters to Maxim Gorky, which have been specially translated for the* LABOUR MONTHLY.]

From *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIX, 2nd ed.
p. 12.

4.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(End of April, 1911. Paris.)

Dear A.M.,

How is your health ? M.F. wrote that you got back with a cough, etc. I hope you are better.

We have had a misfortune with *Mysl*.[1] From *Rech* and other papers you will undoubtedly have learnt what it is. We have got to transfer the business to Petersburg and begin from the beginning. But we have no reliable people who are not proscribed.

Would you not be able to help us if you sympathise with *Mysl* ? Or perhaps Pyatnitsky[2] could help ? This is how things stand : at present we still have money to publish such a small journal (of course, on the condition that we all work for nothing and pay 20 roubles a signature to outsiders ! Not generously, as you see). In other words, *now* we need exclusively *technical* help to find a publisher who, *without spending a kopek of his own*, would publish the journal (and we would observe the *strictest* legality to such an extent that we give the right both to the publisher and to the secretary of the editorial board+the lawyer *to hold back* everything that is the least bit dangerous : we published four Nos. without the slightest cavil from the legal authorities. No. 5 was confiscated because of Kautsky ![3] Obviously it was a cavil. There is nothing illegal in Kautsky).

Why shouldn't Pyatnitsky or some others help us in so safe a business ?

If it is impossible to find a publisher, couldn't one find a *secretary*—someone not proscribed, to whom we will pay 50 roubles a month for his trouble with printing and despatching. He must be an honest and careful man, that's all We *haven't one* man who is not proscribed—except workers (these won't do) : that is our misfortune.

A second thing. We already have a *paid* translation of Kautsky's latest articles against Maslov.[4] Quite inside the law. And necessary, because Maslov has heaped lie upon lie and has lied to Russian readers. 3—5 signatures. Wouldn't it be possible to print it—without fees (because our translation is already paid for) at net cost ? Is Pyatnitsky (or someone else) the right man for such a thing, or not ?

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Thirdly, Y. M. Nakhamkis (alias *Nevzorov, Steklov*, author of a good book on Chernishevsky), sent here from Petersburg for relations with the social democratic fraction, is very anxious to find work and asks me to ask whether it is impossible to print *Peary :* " *The Discovery of the North Pole.*" He thinks there would be a good demand for it.

What news with you of " the plans " ? Do write. And answer the workers from our school. They're good lads. One poet, poor wretch, keeps on writing poetry and has no guide, helper, instructor and adviser.

I shake your hand, yours,

LENIN.

Robert F. Peary.

" La découverte du pôle nord." Paris—magnificent illustrations. The blocks can be bought cheaply here. About 15 signatures of 40,000 letters each (I have just been to see Steklov, who communicated these details to me).

First published in 1924 in *Lenin Symposium*, I. Printed from the manuscript.

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p. 14.

5.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(27 May, 1911. Paris.)

Dear A.M.,

Some days ago I received a letter from Poletaev. He writes, *inter alia :* " I had a letter from Gorky. He makes a proposal to N.I. (Iordansky) to come abroad to work out a plan for uniting around some organ, and he adds that he has spoken to you and to the Menshevik M. about this." (To Martov, I understand.)

Poletaev adds that N.I. would hardly be the right man for this plan and that, if he does go, someone else ought to go as well. It's unlikely he says, that Pokrovsky would go.[5]

After reading this in Poletaev's letter, I got a fright—by God, I got a fright.

Our union with Mensheviks of the Martov kind is *absolutely* hopeless, as I told you here also. If we start arranging a " congress " for such a hopeless plan—only shame will come of it. (I personally won't even go to a conference with Martov.)

Judging by Poletaev's letter, the participation of the Duma fraction is expected. Is that necessary ? If it is a question of a journal, then the Duma fraction isn't concerned. If it's a question of a paper, then one must bear in mind that over *Zvezda* we have had, and have, a considerable

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number of dissensions : they have no line, they are afraid to come with us, they are afraid to go with the liquidators, they wriggle, they get swelled heads, they shilly shally.

Thus, if one aims at union of the Plekhanovites+our people+the Duma fraction, then this threatens to give the *preponderance* to Plekhanov, for in the Duma fraction the Mensheviks predominate. Is it desirable to give the preponderance to Plekhanov ?

I am *very much* afraid that Iordansky is not the man for such plans (because he has *his own* journal, and he will either hinder or drag us into his own journal, keeping it as *his own*—half liberal).

In order to avoid disillusionment and hopeless squabbles, it is necessary in my opinion, to be very careful about " the union." In any case, what is wanted now is not union, but demarcation ! If a publisher is found for the journal or paper, it is necessary *for you alone* to conclude a contract with him (or to take money from him without a contract, if possible), but if a " congress " were arranged, only a mess would come of it. Really, there will be a mess.

I am writing to you, because least of all would I wish to allow *you* to waste time, nerves, etc., on a mess. I myself *know* from the bitter experence of 1908-11 that it is impossible " to unite " *now*. For instance, in *Mysl* Plekhanov has more than once been capricious—was dissatisfied, for instance, with my articles about the strikes and about Potresov, saying that I had attacked " him " ! We managed somehow to settle it, and *for the time being* it is possible and necessary to work with Plekhanov, but *formal* unions and congresses are premature and can spoil everything.

Do not hurry with the congress !

Here they say positively that there is a Stolypin[6] circular about the shutting down of *all* social democratic organs. This looks like the truth. Probably before the Fourth Duma they will tighten things up still ten time more.

Legal possibilities will in the near future evidently diminish. We must put our efforts into the illegal work.

M.F. wrote that you have left " Znanie " entirely. I suppose that means a complete split with Pyatnitsky, and my last letter has come too late ?

I shake your hand, yours

LENIN.

P.S.—*Sovremionnaya Zhizn*[7] in Baku has also been confiscated and smothered.

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p. 17.

To A. M. Gorky at Capri.
(15 September, 1911. Paris.)

Dear A.M.,

My last letter to you must have been two months ago—at the beginning of the school[8] (which has now already ended and the students gone away). There was no answer—I thought that "the negotiations" might have been protracted or that something was radically altered. A few days ago Leshchenko was here; he gave me news about Capri, and I was very glad to hear that the whole thing was entirely due to the postponement of your proposed interview till "after the fair."[9] The plans, however, said Leshchenko—are as before, at Capri: both a thick journal and a big newspaper, and in addition, it seems a cheap paper.

Yes, yes, now would be just the right moment. The liquidators (so they say in Petersburg, whence we got a letter to-day) are buying the *Kiev Kopek* and transferring it to Petersburg. It was extremely important to arrange a rebuff to them.

For the present we have only been able to get the last pennies for the resumption of *Zvezda*. I count very much on your help: send a short article. Help is especially important at first, for it will not be easy to set going the interrupted publication.

Did you get and read Kamenev's pamphlet?[10] I cherish the hope that it must dispel some prejudices which you evidently have against its author.

In party matters there is a glorious mess; but nevertheless things are nearer to a crisis. Plekhanov is wriggling—that he always does before a crisis, it is like an illness. Martov sent Kautsky and Zetkin the translation (typed) of his pamphlet, which was a *great* help to us; both Kautsky and Zetkin attacked the pamphlet cruelly, the former as "revolting," the latter as "foul."

Now, all the best. Write to *Zvezda*.

Drop me a few words if you aren't lazy. A warm greeting to Maria Fiedorovna.

Yours, LENIN.

First published in 1925 in *Lenin Symposium*, III. Printed from the manuscript.

NOTES.

1. The Bolshevik journal *Mysl* had been shut down by the government.
2. K. P. Piatnitsky was one of the founders of the publishing firm "Znanie," and later a joint-owner.

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3. Kautsky's "Tactical tendencies in German Social-Democracy" had been partly published in *Mysl*, and served as excuse for government intervention.

4. Maslov had written an article in *Neue Zeit* attacking Kautsky's book *Multiplication and development in Nature and Society*, to which Kautsky had replied. The argument went on for some time.

5. I. P. Pokrovsky, a doctor and a social-democrat, member of the third Duma, helped to organise *Zvezda* and contributed to it.

6. Stolypin, Prime Minister of the Tsarist Government during the years after the 1905 revolution, extreme reactionary, responsible for the famous "Stolypin Agrarian reform," which aimed at winning the peasants to support of Tsarism.

7. A Workers' paper, with Bolsheviks chiefly responsible, which had a brief life of three numbers in 1911.

8. The Bolshevik Centre organised a party school near Paris in the summer of 1911 for workers sent from Russia.

9. Evidently Lenin was referring to the June conference of members of the C.C. of the Russian S.D. Party.

10. Kamenev's pamphlet *Two Parties*, published in August 1911, with introduction by Lenin. It was written as an answer to Martov's brochure "P" *Saviours or eliminators*. Who destroyed the R.S.D.R.D., and how? mentioned in the next paragraph.

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BOOK REVIEWS

BACKGROUND TO CHINA'S UNITY.

Red Star Over China. By Edgar Snow. (Victor Gollancz.) 18s. (Left Book Club Edition, 2s. 6d.)

> " I have a report that you are a reliable journalist, friendly to the Chinese people, and that you can be trusted to tell the truth. This is all we want to know. It does not matter to us that you are not a Communist. You can write about anything you see, and you will be given every help to investigate the Soviet districts."

THIS is how Edgar Snow was welcomed into Chinese Soviet territory by Red Commander Chou En-lai.

The result of his investigations is his book *Red Star Over China*, which has been enthusiastically welcomed as a magnificent piece of reporting, which will be one of *the* books of the year.

The casual reader, out for excitement, breath-taking achievements, tales of incredible feats of human endurance, will certainly get them.

But those who understand the part that China is playing to-day, who realise that the issue being decided in the Far East is whether fascism shall trample roughshod over civilisation and democracy, or whether the progressive forces of the world shall unite to check this aggression, will find far more than high adventure and clever journalism.

They will find the background without which it is impossible to understand the present situation in China, to appreciate the extent to which a " united China " is a reality and not merely an aim, and the part played by the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Soviet Government and the Chinese Red Army in bringing this about.

Those who correctly see in the Western world the vital importance of winning allies to the working class movement in its struggle against the main enemy—monopoly capitalism—will see how triumphantly history has vindicated this policy in the East also.

Those who have been flirting with Trotskyism, or regarding it with tolerance or even levity, deluding themselves that though they may be mistaken, they are honest people who after all want Socialism, should digest Snow's pungent comment.

" A few years ago, Nanking hoped to use the Stalin-Trotsky controversy to divide the Chinese Communists, but although so-called Chinese Trotskyites did appear, they earned a very bad stigma as spies and traitors—*many of them were led by the logic of their position to join the Blueshirts and betray former comrades to the police*—and they never developed any important mass influence or following, and remained a curious agglomerate of cynical and isolated intellectuals. To the leadership of the Communist Party they were unable to offer any serious threat of disruption at all."

An enormous amount of ground is covered. The axis of the book is the " Long March " organised from Kiangsi, in South China, the capital of the Soviet Districts in 1934, to Shensi, 6,000 miles away to the North West.

Why was this march necessary ? For six years a Soviet society had been steadily and systematically developing in the South.

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Land was re-distributed and taxes lightened. Over 1,000 co-operatives were set up. Unemployment, opium, prostitution, child-slavery and compulsory marriage were abolished and the living conditions of the workers and poor peasants enormously improved. Mass education progressed by leaps and bounds.

But in October, 1933, the Nanking Government mobilised for its fifth and greatest " annihilation " war against the Soviets. It had superior resources, and technical equipment, access to unlimited supplies from the outside world. It had an air fleet of 400 bombing planes. It had General Von Seeckt, former Nazi Chief-of-Staff, as chief adviser.

Nanking itself admitted that about a million people were killed or starved to death in the attempt to destroy the living forces of the Red Army.

How far it failed is more apparent to-day, when events put into the hands of the Communists the life of General Chiang-kai-shek, who fondly imagined that he had " exterminated the menace of Communism ! "

The decision was made to undertake one of the greatest military exploits in history—the armed migration of a nation, which as Snow says made Hannibal's march over the Alps look " like a holiday excursion beside it."

I would like every lad between the age of 14 and 20 to read this, if no other section : the description of how thirty volunteers swung hand over hand along a ruined chain bridge above a yawning, rushing river, under withering machine-gun fire by Government troops ; of a forced march of 85 miles in one night and day to reach a ford before the enemy ; the story of the crossing of 8 mountain ranges and 24 rivers, of encounters with the armies of ten different war lords ; the occupation of 62 cities and 12 provinces.

It would surely convince them that the struggle for Socialism is the greatest of all adventures and that there is no need to go outside the ranks of the toiling people to find heroes and martyrs to exalt and to follow.

" The victorious march of the Red Army," said Mao-tse-tung, Chairman of the Soviet Government, to Edgar Snow, " and its triumphant arrival in Kansu and Shensi with its living forces still intact, was due first to the correct leadership of the Communist Party, and secondly to the great skill, courage, determination and almost superhuman endurance and revolutionary ardour of our Soviet people. The Communist Party of China was, is, and ever will be, faithful to Marxist-Leninism, and it will continue its struggles against every opportunist tendency. In this determination lies one explanation of its invincibility and the certainty of its final victory."

But the book is not all high politics. There are some delightfully " human touches " in it, for Snow can laugh very heartily at his own frailties.

He reproduces some amusing conversations with peasants and soldiers, particularly one old reprobate who swore mightily because he could get no opium from the Co-operative, but later gave Snow a heated explanation of why the peasants welcomed the Red Army with open arms.

This warm and enthusiastic support from the peasantry is mentioned over and over again. It represents the supreme triumph of the Leninist line of winning allies for the revolutionary struggle.

Snow records how a Swiss missionary named Bosshard was arrested by the Chinese Soviet Government and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for reporting movements of Red troops to the Nanking Government. While he was serving his sentence, the Long March began and he was taken along.

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At the end of his sentence, he was released and given a railway ticket to the nearest port.

Journalists swarmed around him, eager for a torrent of abuse and a spate of atrocity stories about the Reds. All they could get out of him, however, was: "Ah, if only the peasants knew what the Communists were like, none of them would run away."

The peasants soon learned and stopped running away. They discovered that under Soviet rule taxation was completely abolished for one year, that all landlords' land was confiscated, and such of the rich peasants' as they could not cultivate themselves; that loans at low or no interest at all were made to help them develop their land; that seed grain was distributed, and agricultural schools set up.

Even the age-long anti-Chinese sentiment of the Mohammedan peasants was overcome, and to-day Mohammedans are fighting side by side with Chinese against their common enemy, Japanese imperialism.

As General Peng explained to Snow: "Tactics are important, but we could not exist if the majority of the people did not support us. *We are nothing but the fist of the people, beating their oppressors.*"

Red Star Over China will remove quite a lot of misapprehensions about the Chinese character, wilfully and maliciously libelled by globe-trotting gossip-writers, would-be novelists, film producers and patronising observers of the native species from the elevated heights of the International Settlements.

It will prove above all that the Chinese peasant is not passive; not a coward. He will fight like a fiend, given something to fight for, given leadership, given organisation, above all, *given arms*.

This is what the Communist Party has done for the Chinese peasant. That is why its leaders, with 50,000 dollars on their heads, can stroll down village streets surrounded by excited small boys, and sit unguarded and oblivious in a crowded audience watching a group of young dancers.

Snow's meticulous accuracy and absolute honesty are so refreshing to meet that it is extraordinarily unfortunate that he should have come such a cropper into the very practice which he so deplores—that of relying on hearsay without supporting evidence—on one point. That is, the relations of the Chinese Communist Party with the Communist International.

Snow, who would walk twenty miles to substantiate a rumour before he would accept it; Snow, who brilliantly flays the Trotskyites for their suicidal tactics in China, without shadow of proof or corroboration, cheerfully trots out the old Trotskyite slander that the Communist International is nothing but an appendage of the C.P.S.U. and must adapt its policy to the convenience of Stalin, and blames it for every set-back which the Chinese Soviets ever experienced.

It is really a tragedy that a book which performs such magnificent service to the friends of democracy and peace, should contain these few pages which will be seized on with glee by the bitterest enemies of the Chinese people in their struggle for independence.

During the last two months China has been flung from impenetrable obscurity into the blazing spotlight of the world's stage.

And the question which many are asking in bewilderment is, how can the Chinese Red Army, which for ten years conducted an increasing struggle against

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the Kuomintang, now merge its forces with the Nationalist Armies to fight against Japan ?

Red Star Over China makes it all clear how for years, propaganda for a united front to stop the spoliation of China by Japan has been steadily carried on by the Soviets, Red Army and C.P. ; it shows the growing desire of the masses everywhere to stop the civil war and unite to stop the Japanese invasion ; and the kidnapping of Chiang-kai-shek, sensational and daring as it was, was only an incident in this steadily rising determination to preserve China's independence.

In China to-day, we have a historic justification of the Communist Parties' claim to represent no interests other than those of the working class.

What a lesson there is for us in this statement of Mao-tse-tung, making clear the reason for the new alliance.

> The victory of the Chinese national liberation movement will be part of the victory of world Communism, because to defeat imperialism in China means the destruction of one of its most powerful bases. If China wins its independence, the world revolution will progress very rapidly. If our country is subjugated by the enemy, we shall lose everything. *For a people being deprived of its national freedom the revolutionary task is not immediate Socialism, but the struggle for independence.* **We cannot even discuss Communism if we are robbed of a country in which to practice it.**

Every decent, civilised person wants to help China to-day.

A wide circulation of Snow's book, and careful discussions upon it, will make every one of us better fitted to come to her aid.

MARJORIE POLLITT.

CROMWELL AND THE ENGLISH MIDDLE CLASS REVOLUTION.

Oliver Cromwell : The Conservative Dictator. By Maurice Ashley. (Jonathan Cape). 12s. 6d.

THIS is the most useful general biography of Oliver Cromwell that has appeared to date. Dr. Ashley has a wide acquaintance with modern research and has reco-ordinated it with interesting viewpoints of his own. He has at last escaped from the attitude of reverence to the puritan hero which has dominated historians since Carlyle, and without silly denigration rightly points out that Cromwell usually won his battles by pinning down a numerically inferior enemy, that he was ambitious, that his judgment (outside military matters) was frequently unsound, and that as he grew older he became more and more subject to caprice and dependent on the firmness of others : that his government was supported by terror, espionage and agents provocateurs. All these should have been obvious enough points, but they needed making. Dr. Ashley has also benefited by his study of the economic history of the protectorate, and this helps to secularise his approach. A deeper knowledge of the fundamental economic problems of the thirties and forties might perhaps incline him to modify his views of Cromwell's conservatism.

The key to Dr. Ashley's provocative and puzzling sub-title is to be found on p. 214, where he refers to " the middle classes, the bulwark of conservatism." Now it is true that Cromwell was a dictator whose bulwark was the middle class. Dr. Ashley has observed that Cromwell was defending a social order similar

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to that shored up by some modern dictators, and transfers the word " conservative " from the 20th to the 17th century as a synonym for " defender of bourgeois property relations." But this undialectical use of words breeds confusion. Cromwell and his like were a progressive force in the 17th century, and he not merely defended bourgeois property relations from attack but was a leader of the revolution which created the conditions in which bourgeois property relations could freely develop. After the revolution had been accomplished, Cromwell did in fact occupy a conservative position vis-a-vis those democratic revolutionaries who wished to extend its benefit further down the social scale: he shot the leveller leaders and excluded the republicans from his parliament. But conservatism is a relative concept, and Cromwell was anything but conservative in relation to the defeated Cavaliers. Even the return to monarchial forms through the Petition and Advice (on which Dr. Ashley has his most interesting and original point to make), though it was a set-back to the progressive elements relying on the army rank and file, was not a return to the old order, any more than Charles II. was restored to his father's throne in 1660. Monarchy is not an absolute: the question we have to ask is, Whose king? And Mr. Ashley's analysis makes it clear that in 1657-8 Cromwell was to be the parliament's king (*i.e.*, to be controlled by the classes represented in the house of commons—the country gentlemen and the urban bourgeoisie), just as " a free parliament " was what was really restored in 1660. That Cromwell should be theirs was more important than that he should be a king, and when pressure from the jealously ambitious army grandees and the democratic lower ranks forced him to decline the crown, parliament raised no objections so long as he accepted the constitution which transferred real power to them. " In the contest with his friendly Parliament he had been outgeneralled." (p. 292).

From 1649, when the grandees first allied with the leveller rank and file to bring the king to justice and then betrayed and shot up their allies, there were two paths for the revolution. Either the big bourgeoisie, creditors of the government and purchasers of the confiscated lands of their defeated enemies, would get the upper hand and stabilise the revolution at the point it had already reached, or the yeomen and small craftsmen of the towns would succeed in carrying out a further social revolution. Cromwell rightly saw that universal suffrage would in fact lead to an attack on property rights as then established, and he and the right-wing of the revolutionary coalition were ultimately prepared to compromise with their defeated enemies rather than see this happen. Ultimately, only, for Cromwell remained sufficient of a revolutionary to wish to avoid a complete switch-over: hence the period of army dictatorship in which he tried to balance the two wings of the Roundheads at the expense of the Cavaliers (decimation tax). But this broke down financially: the army was too expensive to be tolerated by the big bourgeoisie, and its overseas adventures brought no returns. A continuation of the rule of the Major-Generals would have driven the " presbyterians " solidly over to Charles II., as Lambert's reversion to militarism did in 1659-60. Cromwell had to submit to his paymasters or find new resources in a further social revolution. He chose the former.

Mr. Ashley's estimate of him as a conservative is reached by stressing the later part of his career and the conservative phraseology which he shared with all the early revolutionaries. We smile now at the earnest professions of the long parliament that it desired only to preserve the liberties of its ancestors and revert to the ancient ways; but recent experience has taught us that in certain

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circumstances the defence of liberties won by past struggle may be a progressive and indeed revolutionary course. Business society had grown up inside the feudal structure of society with the tolerance of the Tudor monarchy, and had adapted old institutions to its own needs (parliament, common law). These institutions were being attacked in the 1620's and 1630's, when the king was trying to build up a bureaucracy, standing army and system of taxation which would render him independent of the house of commons and the liberal lawyers. Cromwell was on the progressive side in resisting this attack, though he, like most of his contemporaries, was slow in realising the logic implied in his actions, and remained more conservative in thought than in deed.

Mr. Ashley characterises the protector's policy as conservative and dictatorial except in two respects—religious toleration and expedients due to the financial demands of the army. These are fairly large exceptions. In religious toleration was involved the negation of the whole Tudor " State-Ecclesiastical " and its hierarchy, which was the one thing Oliver would not tolerate ; and " expedients due to the monetary demands of the army " conceals the whole process of land confiscation and resale, the abolition of feudal tenures and transition to modern bourgeois property relations, which was the main positive achievement of the revolution, and led to the redistribution of power (through parliament and the J.P.s) with land ownership.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this instructive and valuable book. (1) Unbiassed modern research tends to reach conclusions about the English civil war which in fact, if not in phrase, more and more coincide with the Marxist viewpoint. (2) Left wing historians anxious to relate the past to the present and give it living meaning have a great deal to gain from a study of Marxist theory and the comparative history of revolutions. A study of the French and Russian bourgeois revolutions, e.g., would show Mr. Ashley that the transition from revolution to relative conservatism after the achievement of limited objectives is the rule rather than the exception ; and a knowledge of dialectics would show that defence of bourgeois property relations may be as relatively progressive in one age as it is absolutely reactionary in another.

CHRISTOPHER HILL.

THEORIES OF LOWER WAGES.

New Fashions in Wage Theory. By Jürgen Kuczynski. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 2s. 6d.

LENIN emphasised the statement of Engels that in addition to the political and economic struggle that must be conducted against capitalism, there is also the theoretical struggle against capitalist ideology. Of this, the position in England affords plain proof. Our labour movement has relied in the field of economics, for example, on advisors, on propagandists and teachers who have been nursed in the mumbo-jumbo of the marginal utility theory of value and all that follows from it. Students and professional economists, bewildered at the absurdity of the conclusions to which they have been led, have had little chance of coming into contact with invigorating criticism that would have introduced them to a scientific study of political economy—that is, to Marxism.

This makes the appearance of Jürgen Kuczynski's small book an event of real importance. In includes critical essays on the wage theories of M. Jacques

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Rueff, Mr. Keynes, Mrs. Robinson and Dr. Hicks, and in addition five statistical essays of a positive character.

M. Rueff, whose reputation, Kuczynski remarks, slumps with boom and booms with slump, argues that increase in wages means increase in unemployment. Mr. Keynes argues that to restore economic prosperity prices should increase to such an extent that real wages fall while money wages do not fall or even rise. Mrs. Robinson, carrying the theories of Mr. Keynes to their logical conclusions, maintains that no unemployment would mean economic disaster. Dr. Hicks, with much pure reason and less pure application, solemnly avows that to restore economic health to the community the Trade Unions and Unemployment Benefit should be done away with. Kuczynski demolishes all this erudite propaganda of reaction with admirable incisiveness.

M. Rueff supports his case with a single set of statistics which turn out to be neither typical nor in themselves evidence of his contentions. Mr. Keynes, in the grand manner does not concern himself with evidence ; but Kuczynski plays a good game with him by producing a set of statistics which superficially would seem to have suited Mr. Keynes' purpose, and then demolishes Mr. Keynes together with the statistics he has so generously loaned him. He shows also how ideally suited are the arguments of Mr. Keynes and Mrs. Robinson to the purposes of the fascist dictators.

It is curious how by devious routes and in various styles these experts in economic science pipe one and the same tune. It is perhaps pathetic that a woman who can write so frankly as Mrs. Robinson does in *An Economist's Sermon*, should by the very logic of the premises on which her thought is based, herself prove little better than those she so ably criticises. The attempted excuse of them all is " We must face the facts " (*i.e.*, wage-cuts, etc.)—the old excuse with which MacDonald and Co. clothed their betrayal of the labour movement in 1931. Here Kuczynski well turns their own guns back upon them. " How blind . . . . these same people are," he writes, " to the dangerous consequences of their theories. . . . If the only way out of depression and crisis for present-day society is deterioration of living conditions for the majority of the people, then it really would be better to do away with present-day society and build up a new one." Exactly.

The first of the statistical essays, developing an inquiry begun in Kuczynski's previous book, *Labour Conditions in Western Europe*, shows the fall in the real wages of workers employed in British-controlled cotton industry between 1880 and 1930. The interest of this essay as a statistical confirmation of Marxist theory is that, taking this British-owned industry as a whole, it shows how slight increases in wages per head in Britain have been more than offset by increased exploitation of colonial workers. Though positive in form this essay thus constitutes a most important challenge to the favourite argument of capitalist apologists—" With all its evils capitalism greatly improves the lot of the worker."

The other statistical essays deal with accidents in the coal-mining industry, the relation between death-rate and unemployment (a very interesting essay with rather striking conclusions), valuable suggestions for an improved index of the cost of living and an essay on Productivity and Unproductivity in the U.S.A. What is " unproductivity ? " Kuczynski uses this term to describe the waste of productive forces by reason of increasing unemployment and increasing expenditure of human energy on activities that contribute nothing to human welfare (e.g., almost all advertising). He shows (though I feel a somewhat

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clearer form of index number could here be developed) that in the U.S.A. this waste involved in capitalist production steadily increased from 1897 to the end of the war, and since then has increased very rapidly indeed.

This book is a source of valuable information, stimulating, and pleasant to read. Let it mark the beginning of a veritable bombardment of these ramparts of false theory that surround capitalism.

S. BODINGTON.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Political Economy and Capitalism. Maurice Dobb, M.A. (Routledge.) 10s. 6d. 360 pp.

A Guide to British Liberties. James Curtis. (Fact, No. 6.) 6d. 97 pp.

The Socialist Case. Douglas Jay. (Faber and Faber.) 12s. 6d. 362 pp.

Lonely White Sail. Valentine Kataev. A Novel. (Allen and Unwin.) 7s. 6d. 341 pp.

A Tribe in Transition. D. N. Kajumdar. (Longmans.) 10s. 6d. 216 pp.

What Next O Duce? Beatrice Baskerville. (Longmans.) 10s. 6d. 305 pp.

Eugene Onegin: A Pushkin. In Russian. (Collet's Foreign Department.) £1 1s.

Afterthoughts: A Sequel to Back From the U.S.S.R. André Gide. (Secker and Warburg.) 2s. 6d. 142 pp.

India and the Pacific. C. F. Andrews. (Allen and Unwin.) 3s. 6d. 224 pp.

History of Anarchism in Russia. E. Yaroslavsky. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 2s. 6d. 127 pp.

Socialism Versus Capitalism. A. C. Pigon, M.A. (Macmillan.) 4s. 6d. 139 pp.

"*Chokey.*" Red-Collar Man. (Gollancz.) 6s. 208 pp.

This Was Their Youth. Ralph Fox. (Secker and Warburg.) 7s. 6d. 256 pp.

Storm Over Spain. Mairin Mitchell. (Secker and Warburg.) 6s. 271 pp.

Industrial Relations in the Modern State. R. Keith Kelsall and T. Plautt. (Methuen.) 5s. 131 pp.

Soviet Communism. Second Enlarged Edition. Sidney and Beatrice Webb. (Longmans.) Two volumes, 35s. 1257 pp.

Episodes et Viewx Révolutionnaires: Gracchus Babeuf. René Montgrenier. 80 pp. 2fr. *Le Châtiment des Espions et des Traîtres sous la Révolution Francaise.* Jean Bruhat. 66 pp. 1fr. 50. (Bureau D'Editions.)

Classiques Francais du Socialisme: *Les Causes Economiques de la Révolution Francaise.* Jean Jaures. 103 pp. 2fr. (Bureau D'Editions.)

Les Précurseurs du Socialisme: *Charles Fourier.* F. Armand et Maublanc. 94 pp. 2fr. (Bureau D'Editions.) (Obtainable at Workers' Bookshop Ltd., London.)

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John Langdon-Davies

wrote a telling exposure of the P.O.U.M.'s activities in Spain in a 12-page article in the October "L.M."——You may get one of the few left-over copies at the usual rate of 7d. post free (in cash or stamps)

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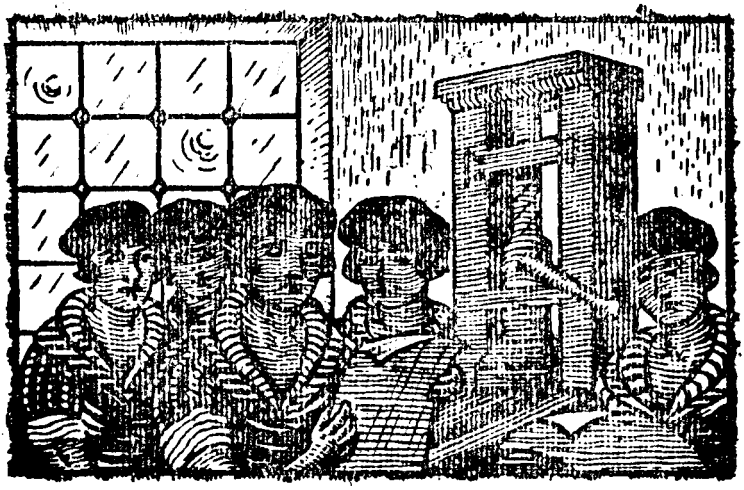

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